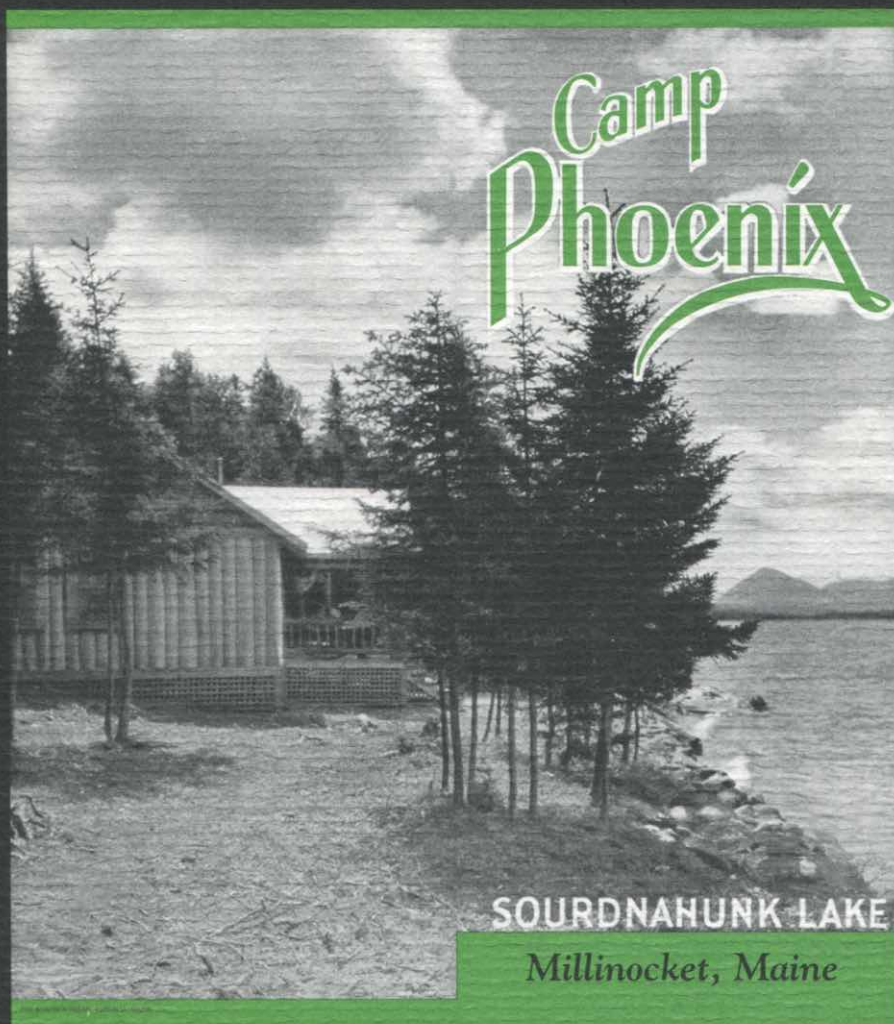


CAMP PHOENIX

The History of a Maine Sporting Camp

T5 R10 Piscataquis County, Maine
Nesowadnehunk Lake



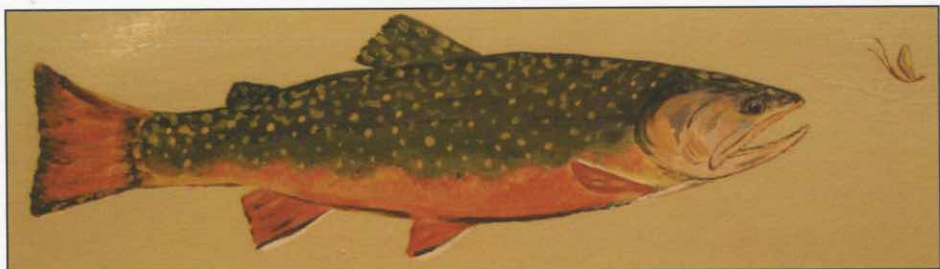
by Bill Horner, MD

Tight lines and
Happy Trails!

Bill Hammel

“In Wildness is the preservation of the World”

Henry David Thoreau



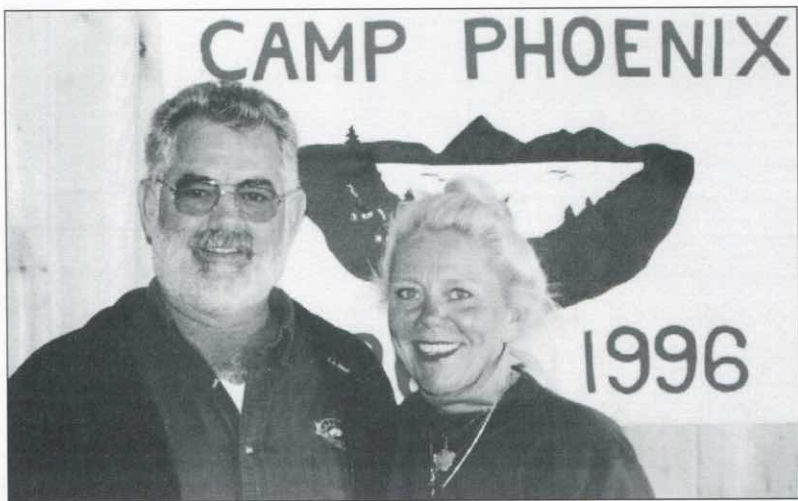
Male Brook Trout and Green Drake Mayfly
Canoe Paddle Art by Cookie Horner

This is the story of an idea and a place. More than 100 years ago, when the Maine Woods was more remote, when trout were more plentiful, when caribou as well as moose and deer walked the forests, men worked hard for a livelihood. A few may have been visionary and with limited financial resources but abundant woods wisdom they gave birth to the idea of the Maine sporting camp. As we will see, the people or “sports” came by the thousands and thus idea evolved into tradition. None of this would have happened without the place and its inhabitants.

Today, these places are scarce, if not long gone. Camp Phoenix, however, remains much the same. Its story is worth telling.

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IN MEMORIAM



Maurice "Mo" Thibeault and his wife Pam Urquhart bought their cabin #13 on September 30, 1989, the first owners of the present era. They were pioneers and more than any of us made Camp Phoenix their home, if one considers the amount of time spent there. Both were keen observers of the outdoor environment, Pam with her camera and Mo with his spotting scope and naturalist's eye. With his engineering background, Mo understood how everything at camp worked and could fix it. He was an oracle of sorts, an ultimate source of information on anything from weather patterns to fly patterns to the timing of the hatch. Of course, he was a good fisherman.

Mo Thibeault died on January 26, 2007. He was an exceptional person with an equally exceptional love and understanding of Sourdahunk Lake and Camp Phoenix. We will miss him.

I am indebted to Katahdin author John W. Neff and to retired Baxter State Park director Buzz Caverly for their thoughtful review, commentary and encouragement during the preparation of the final manuscript. My thanks also to Ann Ahearn of Downeast Graphics & Printing, Inc. for her artistry and patience.

FOREWORD

As often happens, this effort resulted from a single and seemingly small event. Soon after we bought cabin #8 in 1992, I was browsing the card catalog at the Bangor Public Library and came across *An Annotated Bibliography of Katahdin* by Edward Smith and Myron Avery. In this very comprehensive document, written in 1936, there was a reference to the March 1899 issue of *The Maine Sportsman*:

"AT SOURDAHUNK LAKE, a visitor to this home of the moose, deer and trout tells of the various ways to reach Camp Phoenix, and what he found there."

This exciting discovery started an entire chain of events, resulting in the formation of a Camp Phoenix Centennial Committee. The article, dated and with photographs, clearly traced the origins of the camp to 1896. It is reproduced on the following two pages.

With this beginning, the project quickly took on unexpected dimensions. Histories were obtained from members of the McLain and Daisey families. The path eventually led to George and Beryl Emerson, former owners of Camp Phoenix. A photographic record was gradually assembled, documenting the evolution of the camp from its earliest buildings to its present layout. Our talented committee members crafted histories of geology, flora and fauna, deeds and of logging and forestry practices. A broad and colorful picture began to emerge. Camp Phoenix was one of dozens of hunting and fishing enterprises in northern Maine. How did this come about? Who were the McLains and Daiseys of that earliest time and what did they do? What was the condition of the northern forest in the late 1800's and what was going on there? How did people or "sports" get in to remote places like Sourdahunk Lake and where did they come from?

In the end, the story of our camp, related as it is to the discovery, exploration and mapping of the northern reaches of the State of Maine, became every bit as fascinating to me as the opening of the American West. It is a story of uncharted wilderness, of wild rivers, of huge virgin forests, of railroads, of a noble animal now extinct in Maine, and of a breed of determined and resourceful people. Many historians feel that the relatively unsung Maine lumberjacks, river drivers and guides of the 19th century rival the western cowboy in character and legend. It is to these people and the preservation of their memory that this history is respectfully dedicated.

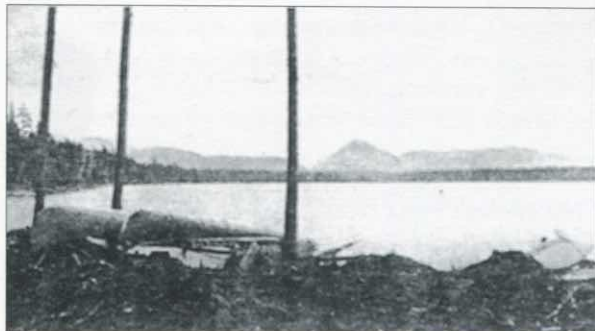
Bill Horner, MD

AT "SOURDAHUNK" LAKE.

A Visitor to This Home of the Moose, Deer and Trout,
Tells of the Various Ways to Reach Camp Phoenix,
and What he Found There.

For the MAINE SPORTSMAN.

About fifteen miles northeast of Mt. Katahdin, on the east shore of Nesowadnehunk Lake, there is a little clearing which, with its groups of three new, clean log cabins, is known as Camp Phoenix.



NESOWADNEHUNK ("SOURDAHUNK") LAKE.

This camp was built by A. McLain and his son Will, who have spent the greater part of their lives hunting and trapping in the vicinity, and is situated in the very midst of a big game and trout country that it would be almost impossible to surpass. Those undisturbed conditions of nature so sought after by the woodland creatures here prevail. The nearest inhabited camps are Hunt's camps and Trout Brook Farm, distant fifteen and twenty miles; and one may hunt for days along the lake shore, or on the surrounding ridges and mountains, without hearing a rifle shot save his own, or seeing a fresh sign of man's presence. On all sides of the lake, especially towards the north and west, those royal inhabitants of the solitary wilderness—the moose, caribou, deer and black bear, wander still in undiminished numbers.

When one takes into consideration the large number of sportsmen who annually visit points along the East and West Branches of the Penobscot, and then the easy accessibility of Nesowadnehunk Lake from either branch, it seems rather remarkable that so few have thus far visited it. The guides at the camp informed me that during the three years the camp has been open, nineteen is the largest number of sportsmen to visit it in one year—including both the fishing and hunting seasons. These few sportsmen succeeded in taking twenty-four moose and eighteen or twenty caribou, besides a large number of deer, of which no record was kept at the camps. It was in this neighborhood that Will McLain shot the moose whose fifty-three inch head—now owned by the Earl of Londonderry—attracted so much attention at the recent New York Sportsmen's Exposition. During our ten days' visit this season we saw eight moose, several caribou and forty or fifty deer; and one of our party took out a handsome trophy in the shape of a forty-three inch moose head. Eleven moose in all were shot by Camp Phoenix sportsmen this season.

The caribou, which are probably more plentiful than the moose, we did not happen to see so many of, although a few have been shot during the season. One afternoon while the two ladies of our party were canoeing in the "thoroughfare," a cow and calf caribou swam across about twenty yards ahead of the canoe and stood in full view on the bank a few yards away, for several minutes. On two different occasions, members of our party came near enough to cow moose to throw sticks at them and hit them before they would run, seeming to

know that they were protected by the law of the state.

Among the large number of deer shot around the lake this year were some with very handsome heads. No sportsman was disappointed in getting at least one, and most of them took out their full allowance. We saw plenty of fresh bear signs but did not catch sight of the wary animals. On the beech wood ridges there were many trees which showed broken limbs, where they had been climbing. The smaller fur bearing animals,—mink, otter, sable and others—are quite

plentiful in the vicinity, and there is a beaver dam now in course of construction about five miles from camp on the west side of the lake, which is well worth a visit.

But remarkably good as this section of the country is for the big game, it is even more remarkable for the quantity of square tailed, speckled brook trout in the lake and neighboring waters. It is to be doubted if one may anywhere find a better naturally stocked lake. The trout run at the nearly uniform length of twelve or thirteen inches, and average weight of fourteen or fifteen ounces; and it would be hard to exaggerate their number. This feature of 'Sowadnehunk waters aroused the wonder of Thoreau in his famous pioneer trip to Katahdin in

1874. The conditions he referred to still exist; and in the shallow borders of the "thoroughfare", or the neighboring "spring-hole," no other tackle than a sapling or a canoe paddle is required to kill all the fish one needs. In the deeper water they are gamy and afford good fly-fishing, although they will rise to a knot of bright yarn as well as to an artistically made fly. At Little 'Sowadnehunk Lake, a mile to the north, rather larger trout abound, averaging over eighteen ounces. I understand that to these two lakes there are no fish to be taken but trout.

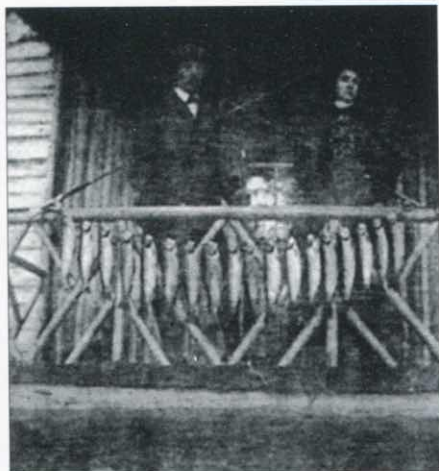


CAMP PHOENIX, 'SOWADNEHUNK LAKE.

The vicinity of 'Sowadnehunk is rich and fruitful in interest not alone to the hunter and fisherman but also to the lover of nature for nature's sake. The lake is a gem in its setting of natural scenery. Between it and Katahdin are half a dozen high hills and peaks, usually cloud capped, and often snow

capped these late autumn days. And every passing hour of the day shows some new beauty of atmospheric coloring on these hillsides. Even the stormy days are not dull in interest when one may watch the rocky cliffs tearing the clouds apart.

There are two ways of reaching 'Sowadnehunk from stations



BROOK TROUT FROM 'SOWADNEHUNK.

on the Bangor & Aroostook; both routes themselves passing through good game country. The one by way of Patten, Shin Pond and Trout Brook Farm involves a fifty mile walk or buckboard ride over the roads, requiring about two and a half days' time. The trip by way of Norcross is shorter, and even more picturesque, and may be covered in two days. A steamer running from Norcross to various points on Twin, Pemadumcook and Ambajesus Lakes, will take the traveller fifteen miles on his way to Camp Wellington run by Seiden McPheters. At this point one crosses a half-mile carry on a jumper, and begins the ascent of the West Branch in canoes. The river passes the foothills of Katahdin, and every mile of the fifteen or so has scenery worthy of the art of a landscape painter. One should by all means take a photographic camera with him on his trips to 'Sowadnehunk, difficult as it may be to carry.

Most of the distance, the canoe trip up river is in still water, but for the last mile the canoe must be poled. The carries, five in number, are mostly short and follow easy trails; their worst feature is their Indian names,—Amhajejus, Passcomgomoc (spoken "Passamagamac"), Katepskonegan (or Debsconeag), Pockwockamus and Aboljackarmegassett. The canoe trip ends a little above the point of junction between 'Sowadnehunk Stream and the West Branch. We made this trip from Norcross in about 9 or 10 hours (exclusive of the dinner hour rest,) although it requires steady work to make it between sunrise and sunset.

From Hunt's Camp a tote road follows the bank of the 'Sowadnehunk Stream, along the narrow valley between Double Top and Mount Coe, which tower 1500 or 2000 feet high on either side. The two ladies of our party, who so far as we could learn are the first white women to go over this trail, rode on a "juniper" or wood-sled. The road, which is exceedingly rough and stony, and oftentimes running close to the steep river bank, furnished them with exciting experiences long to be remembered. But Mr. Hunt's "jumper" is just the thing for the business, his horses remarkably intelligent, careful, and well broken to forest work, and the teamster, Lock Cum-

min, an excellent and accommodating driver, so that the trip from Hunt's to 'Sowadnehunk, even for ladies is not a formidable matter, but full of interest. There is a camp belonging to Mr. Hunt where the party and horses may rest for the noon-day meal.

Camp Phoenix should be reached in the middle of the afternoon. We did not arrive until five o'clock, having spent much time in clearing the trail of fallen trees. The trip from the West Branch to the lake has some very beautiful and some very grand scenery, where the rushing stream leaps over giant boulders in the riverbed, and the banks of the stream rise sheer for many hundred feet.

Camp Phoenix is at present conducted by Will McLain and the Hall Brothers, enterprising young men, expert canoeists, hard working guides and familiar with the country; and they do all in their power to make every visitor successful as well as comfortable.

The members of our party are all enthusiastic about the trip, and feel that, even if they had not come back with all the trophies they could carry, they would still have been well repaid for time and trouble, in having visited one of the most beautiful lakes they had ever seen.

A while ago the policeman on a certain beat in Lewiston went fishing at Sabatis pond and caught a lot of pickerel. But before he got back the janitor of a large Lewiston building was sure that he would not get any fish, and began to laugh at him. When he returned and the janitor found that he really had some pickerel he stopped laughing and decided to go himself and catch more. So he and a friend went out and made their way to Sabatis. They came, after a long walk from the car, to a level piece of snow which they decided was Sabatis pond. So they cut holes, fixed up their traps and waited for bites all the afternoon. At night they had not a bite, and upon examination they found that instead of Sabatis pond they had got out of the road, and cut holes through the crust



OUR PARTY ON THE LAKE.

where a brook had overflowed—or rather underflowed the crust on a field, and had been fishing in a Sabatis man's corn field. They decided that it was the strong coffee that they took along that made the difference in their selection of fishing grounds.

*When despair for the world grows in me
And I wake in the night at the least sound
In fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests
in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

- Wendell Berry



To my grandchildren:

Alex, Alicia, Ava, Chase, Ellie,
Helena, Jane, Olivia and Tarzan

May you grow to love and learn from this place,
Where there is peace of wild things and hope
For the future of your planet.

Love, Poppy



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Phoenix, famous firebird of Egyptian mythology, conjures up images of destruction and rejuvenation. In researching the history of Camp Phoenix, it is commonly assumed that at some point the camp burned and with its rebuilding was called "Camp Phoenix". In fact, there was a well documented fire in October, 1931 which completely destroyed the main lodge, but the camp had already been called "Phoenix" for many years. It is equally well documented that the camp was known by the same name at its original construction on the current site in 1896. Therefore, one supposes that there was in fact another fire.

As we will see, the first McLain building was located considerably south of the present site at the mouth of Slaughter Brook. David Priest of Winn, Maine, supervising game warden of the Ripogenus district starting in 1947, told me that the McLains built a trappers cabin near Stump Brook and that it burned down. George Emerson, who owned Camp Phoenix from 1955 until 1971, told me at the Centennial Weekend in August, 1996 that Arnold Daisey described the same thing on several occasions. It is quite likely, therefore, that the McLains did experience a fire and decided to rebuild their camp at our present day location, calling it "Camp Phoenix".

In addition, the word "Phoenix" is uncommon in Maine, and is especially unique as a camp name. Reviewing the dozens of camp names from issues of *In the Maine Woods* of the time, I found that more than a third were place names (Indian Pond Camps, Kidney Pond Camps, Rainbow Lake Camps), about one third were named for the owner (Atkin's Camps, Camp Iverson, York's Twin Pine Camps), about one quarter were generic (The Antlers, Camp Fairview, The Firs) and about one tenth were of Native American derivation (Camp Wapiti, Lunksoos House). There is nothing which approaches the classic or mythic reference of "Phoenix". I think its reasonable to conclude that there was in fact an impressive and devastating event, and from this the McLains called their new structures Camp Phoenix.

The camp lies on the eastern shore of a lake known by a variety of names. The original "Nesowadnehunk" is an Abenaki word and means "swift water between mountains". This probably refers to the 16 mile stream or outflow from the lake to the West Branch of the Penobscot River which near Daicey Pond drops spectacularly over a series of falls. A more commonly used contemporary variant is "Sourdnahunk", although "Sowdyhunk" or simply "The Hunk" is heard among local people most familiar with the place.

To avoid confusion, I have used "Sourdnahunk" throughout most of this book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have called this history a story rather than an academic treatise. My goal was to portray as accurately as possible information derived from a variety of sources, not all of which are certain or in the end verifiable. It was difficult to match dates with photographs, for example. And yet the totality of information from all sources allowed one to be reasonably accurate. Much of the information came from conversations with people who were actually there, or who were no more than a generation removed. In three notable instances, the conversation was recorded for later reference. In another, the written words were discovered. And many of the original materials speak for themselves.

I have listed my primary sources, written and spoken. When appropriate and with some license I have referred back to them in the text.

GENERAL NORTHERN MAINE HISTORY

Aroostook. A Century of Logging in Northern Maine by Richard Judd. 1989
excellent comprehensive history with section on the Bangor and
Aroostook Railroad

The Penobscot Man by Fannie Hardy Eckstorm. 1904
collection of classic stories from West Branch drives

Forest Life and Forest Trees by John S. Springer. 1851
early accounts of logging life in northern Maine

The Long Spruce Drive by Lore A. Rogers.
available at The Lumberman's Museum, Patten

CAMP PHOENIX

In the Maine Woods, published annually by the BAR from about 1898
until the mid 1940's; a promotional periodical, it provided many photos,
dates and Phoenix related articles

The Maine Sportsman, a sporting tabloid, published monthly from 1893 to 1910

The Northern, published monthly by Great Northern Paper Co. from 1921 to 1928
pictures and articles on paper company roads and Ripogenus Dam

In and Around Our Great Northern Wilderness by Elinor Stevens Walker. 1968
an account of Camp Phoenix taken from McLain and Daisey family members

The Recorded Deed History of Camp Phoenix and Sourdnamunk Lake 1820-1996
compiled by Ronald Mitchell

THE MCLAINS

Lillian and David Priest of Winn, Maine provided valuable information. Dave was a well known Ripogenus district game warden. Lillian, a genealogist, was a great-great-niece of Albert McLain.

THE DAISEYS

Ella Daisey Ireland, daughter of Charles, gave me a taped interview on November 28, 1994. Most of the specific details of camp life and operation came from that afternoon. She and her sister Ellen provided me with many of the pictures which form the core of this history.

GEORGE EMERSON, JR.

George, his wife Beryl, daughter Linda and grandson Daniel returned to Camp Phoenix for the Centennial Weekend on August 27, 1996. None of them had been back for many years. We told many stories, had a lengthy interview and took an extended tour of the camp and Sourdnhunk Lake. Then and subsequently George supplied me with many Phoenix pictures, from his own era and much earlier.

ALBERT CALL and DANIEL WAKEFIELD

Bert Call was a commercial photographer from Dexter. In addition to studio work he was hired by the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad to do promotional photography of the northern Maine Woods. His Katahdin and sporting camp photos appear in many issues of *In the Maine Woods*. An extensive 4000 photograph collection is now archived at the Fogler Library of the University of Maine. It is an invaluable visual record of early twentieth century Maine.

Dan Wakefield was Call's assistant, some twenty years younger. I met Dan in 1993 and spent several pleasant hours with him, poring over the Call Collection at the Fogler. In it, we found more than a dozen Camp Phoenix pictures from 1932, a valuable confirmatory link in this project. We had many wonderful conversations about a fondly remembered past. Sadly, Dan passed away before I could get him back to camp for one last Sourdnhunk trout.

KATAHDIN and the KATAHDINAUGUOH

The literature on Katahdin is vast. Three authors deserve special comment:

George H. Witherle of Castine explored the Katahdin region over a 21 year period starting in 1880. His classic *Explorations West and Northwest of Katahdin* in the late nineteenth century is a masterfully concise journal of discovery. It has been preserved by the Maine Appalachian Trail Club and is available at the Bangor Public Library.

Myron H. Avery of Lubec is best known as the father of the Appalachian Trail in Maine. As chairman of the Appalachian Trail Conference in the 1930's his was the dominant influence in establishing Katahdin as the northern terminus of the Trail. He was a serious scholar who had a fascination for Katahdin and the surrounding mountain ranges. Fortunately for us, he left a legacy of writings in various periodicals. One, *The Katahdinauguoh*, is particularly noteworthy and appeared in the 1929 issue of *In the Maine Woods*.

John W. Neff's *Katahdin, An Historic Journey: Legends, Explorations, and Preservation* was published by the Appalachian Mountain Club in 2006. It is a well researched and highly readable 350 page account of Katahdin's unique place in Northern Maine's history.

JAKE'S RANGERS

The lore of Katahdin and northern Maine would be incomplete without reference to Maurice "Jake" Day of Damariscotta and his intrepid band of Rangers. Jake Day was a graphic artist most remembered for his work at the Walt Disney Studios and for his contributions to the 1942 movie "Bambi". Jake convinced Disney that the model for Bambi should be a Maine Whitetail. He returned to his native State of Maine and spent many months in what is now Baxter State Park sketching and photographing all manner of flora and fauna. He also painted scenes from Maine's logging history past and many of his artistic works can be seen in institutions and museums around Maine. The Lumberman's Museum in Patten and Baxter State Park Authority have several of them. One small masterpiece persists as the Baxter State Park logo. Another is his whimsical rendition of Pamola, the Native American spirit caretaker of Katahdin.

Jake Day retired to Damariscotta and began another life chapter as the leader of Jake's Rangers whose antics and adventures are preserved in several books by Edmund Ware Smith. His son McLure visited Camp Phoenix at the 1996 Centennial where we spent several delightful hours on the porch recounting on tape many of the Ranger tales found in Smith's books. I was honored to be presented with an official Jake's Rangers hat and an unofficial but priceless affiliation with that legendary group.



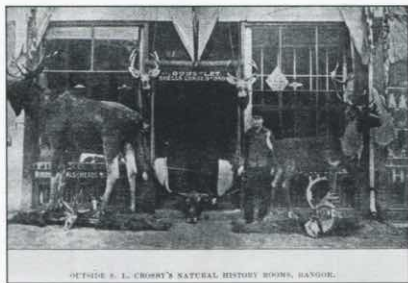
JAKE'S RANGERS IN 1952, PRESENTED BY MAC DAY

L to R: Jake Day, Sam Belknap, Eddie Pierce, Jack Glidden,
Lester Hall, Ed Smith, Bently Glidden, Mac Day

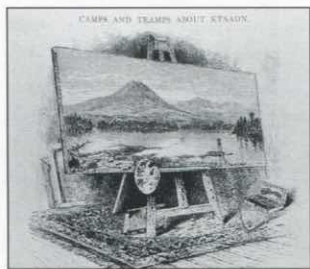
LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY MAINE

At the end of the American Civil War the northern Maine woods was a largely uncharted territory, a "last frontier" relative to the densely populated eastern United States. Explorers, naturalists and timber cruisers had penetrated the area, pursuing scientific and commercial interests. They encountered vast tracts of unbroken forest and, as a legacy to a glacial past, countless lakes, bogs, streams and rivers. Timber was the primary resource of this land and water was the only practical means of access and transport. Even by this time, some 50 years after statehood, much of the white pine had been cut off and long log spruce logging was starting up in earnest. Papermaking technology came to Maine in 1865, but the harvest was primarily intended for building materials.

With post-war reconstruction and recovery from the financial crisis of 1873, there came an unprecedented demand for timber. This would usher in the "golden age" of the legendary long spruce log drives on the Penobscot River, lasting well past the turn of the century. For a time Bangor would become the world's leading exporter of value added wood products. With the formation of the Great Northern Paper Company in 1900, yet another huge demand for spruce wood came, this time in the more easily driven four foot pulp wood lengths.



S.L. Crosby's Taxidermy in Bangor, 1896.
Note full mounted caribou on right



Sketch of Katahdin from the east
by Church, appearing in 1873 issue of
Scribners Magazine

was created by the prose of Henry David Thoreau and the artistic impressions of the Hudson River School. Thomas Cole and then his student Frederick Church portrayed a vision of grandeur in many striking paintings of the Maine coast and Katahdin. Church made several trips to Maine from the early 1850's onward. He was particularly taken with Millinocket Lake, building "Camp Rhodora" on its southern shore and using this spectacular vantage point for several of his now famous Katahdin paintings.

The isolated northern forests of the late 1800's were full of game. Moose, deer and even woodland caribou were plentiful. There was commercial fur trapping, given the abundance of beaver, marten and other species, and brook trout were everywhere. These resources would soon be discovered by "sports" from up and down the eastern seaboard.

The northern forest also had an unspoiled, health promoting, mystical quality in that era. Many of the eastern cities were plagued by outbreaks of communicable diseases, especially in the summer months. Wealthy rusticators from Boston to Philadelphia looked at Maine as a place to promote both physical and spiritual health. In part, this impression

The isolation and limited access to northern Maine was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it allowed the resources—the forest, game and clean air—to persist well into the twentieth century, long after other areas had succumbed to industrialization. On the other, it impeded reasonable development and progress of the citizens of northern Maine.

Well past the Civil War, the only overland route was the Military Road, a rough affair built in 1832 connecting Bangor and Houlton. The primary commercial routes were, of course, the Penobscot and St. John Rivers. With the great demand for timber and the cheap transportation provided by water, there was little incentive to develop a road system. Thus, it was very difficult to go north in Maine, a fact pointedly commented upon by Thoreau and other literary notables. Meanwhile, people in Aroostook County were not happy. Unlike the Penobscot, which flowed into the ready markets of Bangor, the shallow and undependable St. John River flowed into Canada. Logs landed there went out of the state with no value added. Aroostook timber people wanted a railroad connection with the centers of commerce in Maine and New England. After many contentious years of failed efforts, a rail line between Searsport and Houlton was completed in 1893. With this event, the birth of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, the face of the northern Maine woods changed dramatically. For now, not only was there transportation of valuable timber products out of northern Maine, there was ready and easy access for eastern urban “sports” to the unparalleled hunting, fishing and rustivating opportunities of the healthful North Woods.



Advertisement from
The Maine Sportsman
September, 1899

“The character of the country determines the occupations of the inhabitants.” So said the geographer Charles Jackson when he visited northern Maine in 1838. Not surprising then that as our story unfolds we will encounter timber cruisers, lumberjacks, river drivers, trappers and of course the Maine Guide. Often these were the same person. A resourceful man of that time would guide hunters in the fall, cruise the winter woods for a timber harvester, run the log drive in the spring freshest and be a fishing camp guide in the summer. Guiding was a highly developed activity in the Maine of the 1890’s. *The Maine Sportsman* of October, 1896, listed more than 100 such men from Rangely Lake to Aroostook County. Of interest to us are the names McLain and Daisey.



Group of Maine Guides at the New York
Exposition in 1897

THE SOURDNAHUNK

In the 1890’s, Nesowadnehunk (or Sourdnehunk) Country, a large area west of the range of mountains from The Traveler south to Katahdin, was isolated even by north country standards. Two important points of entry would emerge, one from the east and the other from the south. The town of Patten, north and

east, had a long established tote road running in to Matagamon Lake and Trout Brook Farm. The latter was important to logging operations running into the Penobscot's East Branch. This road would be extended to the west along Trout Brook and eventually make its way to Sourdnahunk Lake, 52 miles distant from Patten. This was a rough buckboard trip, taking about two days.

The other and subsequently more important point of entry was the town of Norcross on North Twin Lake, a few miles southwest of what we today call Millinocket. The trip up the West Branch of the Penobscot was arduous, to say the very least. By steamer over Twin, Pemadumcook and Ambajeus Lakes, by poled canoe above Ambajeus Falls through Passamagamock, Debsconeag, Pockwockamus and Abol, then finally to the mouth of Sourdnahunk Stream just below Sourdnahunk Falls on the West Branch, this was hard going for guide and sport alike. Parties would camp here for the night and fortify themselves for the second day which was more demanding than the first. This was a 16 mile trek over primitive tote roads, using horse drawn "jumpers" for the baggage and "Shank's Mare" for the sports. The covered distance was 40 miles in two rugged days. A colorful account of this passage appeared in the 1916 issue of *In the Maine Woods* and is very enjoyable reading.

With the coming of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, a direct and efficient link was established between Norcross, Patten and the "outside world". This fact was heavily promoted in a yearly publication of the BAR, *In the Maine Woods*. Both towns would undergo considerable growth and advertise themselves as "game centers". Indeed, the town of Norcross had two hotels, the Norcross House and the Norcross Hotel. The latter had guides' quarters so that incoming parties could be met at the train and taken off to the their north woods destinations with little delay.

NORCROSS HOUSE,
NORCROSS, MAINE.
ON R. & A. R. R.
The Game Centre of the World.
Guides furnished with full camping outfit.
In open season, steamers leave daily for lake points. Trains always ready to carry guests to any point.
Wire or write
W. R. STRATTON,
Proprietor.

The Norcross House.
Only hotel at Norcross, and the leading sportsman's resort in the West Branch Lake country. As it is placed by good four seasons, situated near station overlooking North Twin Lake. Visited by many famous sportsmen and hunters than any other hotel on the main line of the R. & A. Point of departure for parties on West Branch, the Jo Mary Lakes, and the Katahdin lakes and streams. Steamer leave daily from wharf near hotel.
Guides and outfit supplied on order by mail or telegraph.
THE NORCROSS SUPPLY STORE.
Conducted in connection with hotel. All kinds of camp supplies, gear and fishing tackle, cooking outfit, bedding, moose and deer. Includes customizing fishing or hunting riggers of northern Maine absolutely perfect. Write for terms and circulars.
J. HUNTER, JR., Proprietor, Norcross, Me.



One of two hotels in once thriving Norcross

This deer hunting scene was titled "One Day's Kill"

Steamers on North Twin Lake



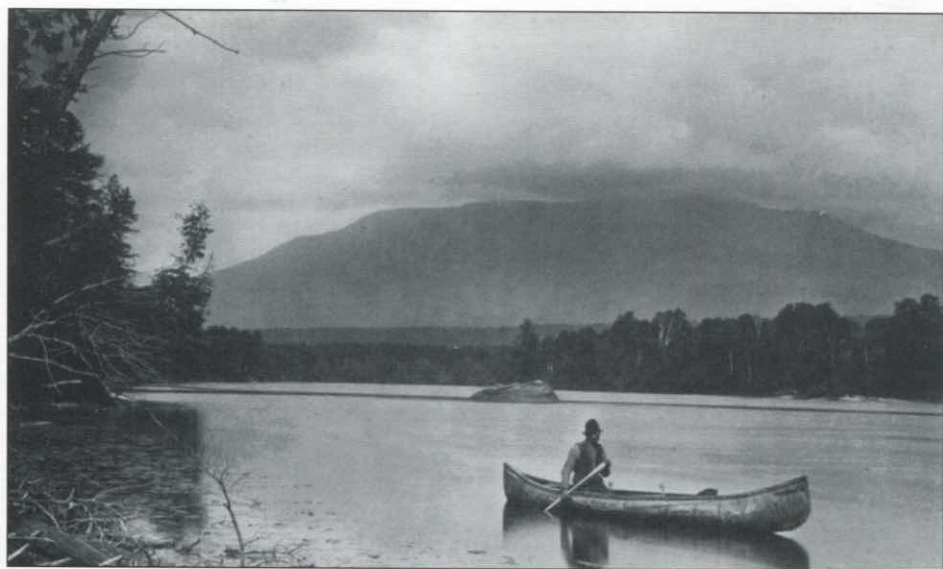
Debsconeag Falls Carry



Jumper at the mouth of Sourdnahunk Stream



Tramping over the Sourdnahunk Tote Road



JAMES C. STODDER

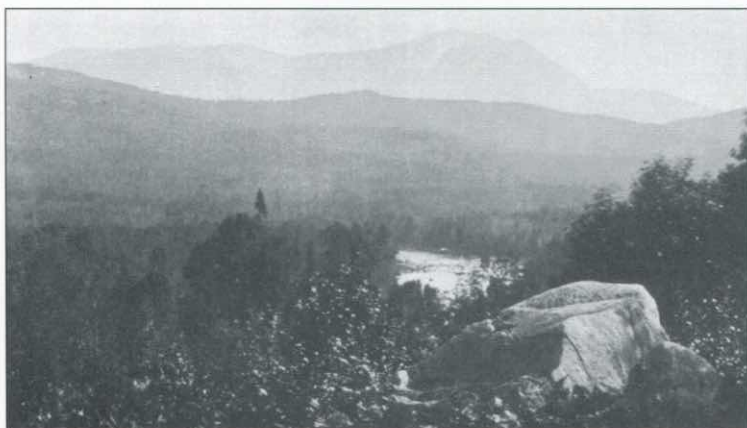
Photographs of nineteenth century northern Maine are rare. James Stodder was born in New York City in 1838. He moved to Bangor in the early 1860's. In 1876 he was asked to accompany Frederick Church to Katahdin. As noted by Myron Avery in an article entitled *Nineteenth Century Photographers of Katahdin* which appeared in the December, 1946 issue of *Appalachia Magazine*, "*One of the Church expeditions to Katahdin, which was particularly noteworthy in the nature of the travel involved, was the excursion of 1876. This was Church's second trip to Katahdin by way of the Penobscot West Branch. On this expedition, Church was accompanied by James C. Stodder of Bangor, Maine...Of particular interest are the camping scenes, with the enormous birchbark canoes and the complement of Indian guides...Particularly outstanding...are the features of Ripogenus Gorge. These include the Big and Little Heaters at a time prior to the building of the dams which resulted in the Dry Way, long antedating the present Ripogenus Dam.*"

I am indebted to the Bangor Public Library and photographer Story Litchfield for these remarkable scenes of a "freestone" Penobscot River from an era in which Chesuncook Lake did not exist as we see it today (Ripogenus Dam was not completed until 1915). Also remarkable are the images of the classic birchbark canoe and that work horse of the log drive, the bateau. According to Lore A. Rogers in his *The Long Spruce Drive*, the bateau was descended from craft used by the early French explorers. It was double ended with a long overhang, flat bottomed and hard chined with 2 or 3 strakes, depending on size. They averaged 35 feet in length, had a 3 and a half foot beam and weighed 800 to 900 pounds. They could be poled upstream fairly easily and had enormous capacity. Going down stream they rarely took on water. Typically, 6 men were needed: 4 oarsmen, a bowman and sternman both using paddles or poles for steerage.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES C. STODDER



Ktaadn from the head of Sourdnahunk Falls



Ktaadn from the "Big Rock" on Ripogenus Carry



On the West Branch...preparing for a portage?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES C. STODDER



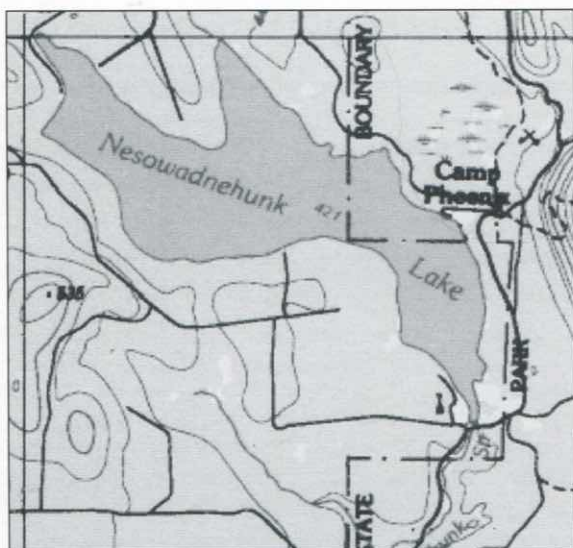
Birchbark canoe and bateau side by side



Ripogenus Gorge, looking downstream toward the Heaters



Foot of Chesuncook Falls, Ripogenus Lake and "Sourdnahunk Mountain"



SOURDNAHUNK (NESOWADNEHUNK) LAKE

Sourdnaunk Lake is located in Township 5 Range 10 WELS (west of the eastern line of the state) in Piscataquis County. It is at about 1400 feet elevation. It flows south to the Penobscot West Branch via Sourdnaunk Stream, which is some 16 miles long, passing through a valley bounded by Doubletop Mountain to the west and the Katahdinauguoh (range of mountains west of Katahdin) to the east. In 1849 the Sourdnaunk Dam and Sluice Company was chartered. This allowed for construction of a dam at the southern outlet of Sourdnaunk Lake and ushered in an important chapter in the lake's history as it became an active participant in the big West Branch log drives. In 1879, the so-called "Toll Dam" was built about 10 miles down Sourdnaunk Stream, near Daicey Pond and just upstream from Big and Little Niagara Falls. So rough and tumble were the spring freshets that it was claimed that Sourdnaunk logs could be identified by their lack of bark! Although the Toll Dam and log drives are long gone, the lake dam remains as a modern cement structure with a highly functional fish ladder, extremely important in maintaining the health and vigor of Sourdnaunk's naturally breeding population of Brook Trout.

Several features of Sourdnaunk Lake are important to understand from a historical perspective. The "Thorofare" is located just above the dam, between it and what was probably the lake's natural southern end prior to the dam. It contains a spring hole which attracts a large number of trout, as old accounts attest. For this reason, it is closed to fishing. McLain's first "trappers cabin" may have been located there. Further north on the eastern shore is the inlet from Stump Brook, another possible location for the first McLain Cabin. Camp Phoenix, from 1896 to the present, lies on the northeast shore, at the inlet of Slaughter Brook. Except for two additional developments, the lakeshore is entirely wild. Nesowadneunk Lake Wilderness Campground is a commercial operation located just west of the dam and the Retirees Campground, for former Great Northern Paper Company employees, is at the far western extremity of the lake.

OVERVIEW

The following timeline maybe helpful in putting specific aspects of Camp Phoenix history into context. It is derived from impressions, based mostly on verifiable data, gathered and thought about over the past 10 years.

- 1895 Albert McLain (1841-1912) and son Will (-1952) build a single structure near Stump Brook or The Thorofare, referred to as a "trappers camp". Both are well known guides and trappers with many years of experience in Sourdnhunk area.
- 1896 McLains abandon (burned out?) trapping camp and move to Slaughter Brook site. They build 3 structures as a "sporting camp" and call them "Camp Phoenix".
- 1899 Article appears in *The Maine Sportsman* with detailed description and dating origin of "Camp Phoenix" to 1896. An advertisement shows camp run by the Hall brothers (probably of Patten) and McLain.
- 1902 Ad in *In the Maine Woods* shows Camp Phoenix run by W.A. McLain. Continues to 1904.
- 1905 Ad in *In the Maine Woods* shows Camp Phoenix run by C.A. Daisey. Charles Daisey (1868-1953) runs Camp Phoenix for the next 37 years. His son Arnold (1900-1980) succeeds him and gradually creates the camp in its present configuration. Deed indicates transfer to Arnold in 1941.
- 1912 Millinocket-Sourdnhunk Road opens for summer use. Connects to present Sourdnhunk Field. Previously, this was a tote road, suitable for use only under frozen winter conditions. Now passable by buckboard, it requires 42 miles and 2 days from Millinocket.
- 1915 Ripogenus Dam completed by means of well paved "Turnpike Road" from Greenville. This opens the area to automotive traffic.
- 1922 Duck Pond to Sourdnhunk Field CCC road completed, linking with Turnpike Road. The terminus at Sourdnhunk Field called "end of the road" by the Daiseys. Charles places a chain across the "end of the road", with Percival Baxter's approval, creating a private compound in Camp Phoenix and Sourdnhunk. Arriving guests place their cars in a garage there and telephone the camp for private transportation over the remaining 5 miles. Until 1937 this was a horse and wagon, later a modified station wagon.
- 1910's Charles Daisey adds a number of small cabins along the lake shore, extending south from the original 3 McLain buildings. These are built in traditional "Lincoln log" style.
- 1920's Arnold Daisey starts to transform the camp. He builds a central lodge and gradually removes shoreline cabins, replacing them with his distinctive style of upright spruce logs (stockade style). Most of these remain today.

- 1931 Original central lodge burns in an October fire. Charles has a narrow escape. Another identical lodge is built on the same site.
- 1932 Bert Call dated photos show extensive remodeling of camp, approaching present configuration.
- 1930's Considered by the Daiseys as the "hay day" and probably represented by the brochure shown on the cover, the camp featured electricity, garden grown and live stock supplied food, isolation from the public, exclusive use of the entire lake, unparalleled trout fishing, live in guides, and speedy access by car from Greenville. They had a large and loyal clientele who returned year after year.
- 1937 Charles Daisey purchases the land occupied by Camp Phoenix from the Keith family. Formerly a lease, it totals about 20 acres. "The happiest day in his life", says his daughter, Ella Ireland.
- 1942 The chain at the "end of the road" comes down and Charles retires at age 74. His son, Arnold, a partner since 1929, acquires full ownership.
- 1956 Arnold sells to George and Beryl Emerson, Jr. of Livermore Falls, Maine.
- 1971 The Emersons sell to Irving and Claire Sally of Attleboro, Massachusetts.
- 1979 The Sallys sell to Harold and Patricia Burbank of Epping, New Hampshire
- 1984 The Burbanks sell to Richard and Carolyn LeDuc of Sherman, Maine.
- 1988 The LeDucs sell to Firstmark Corporation of Waterville, Maine. Firstmark applies to the Land Use Regulatory Commission for a development permit, granted in September.
- 1989 Firstmark Corporation to Firstmark Vacationland Partners to Gary Merrill and Bill Holland to Phoenix Partners, Incorporated. The original permit is amended, allowing for the sale of all the Camp Phoenix units. This process is completed in 4 years, resulting in the formation of the Camp Phoenix Owners Association.
- 1996 The Camp Phoenix Centennial Weekend is held in August.



A view of the original Camp Phoenix taken in the early 1900's

THE MCLAINS

Albert McLain was born near Passadumkeag in 1841. According to his great-great niece, Lillian Priest of Winn and with whom I spoke, he was a trapper and guide by trade and had an intimate knowledge of the wild territory west of Katahdin. He had a son named Will who lived until 1952 and with whom Lillian was familiar. He lived his later years in Lincoln and made birchbark canoes. In 1895, Albert and Will built a trappers cabin "on the east shore (of Sourdnahunk Lake) perhaps a half mile above the outlet", according to Elinor Stevens Walker in her book *In and Around our Great Northern Wilderness*, published in 1968. They generally got in to Sourdnahunk via Patten, using horse drawn jumpers for hauling in supplies and taking out pelts and boxes of spruce gum for sale in Bangor. Mrs. Stevens states, "They lived like Indians and loved it".

Again according to Mrs. Stevens, the McLains abandoned their trappers cabin after a year and moved "up the take about a mile above the outlet" where they built a "sporting camp". This was a two-storied building "which contained the cook house and dining room with lodgings on the second floor". This description fits with the photograph above and the location she describes is consistent with our present site. Why did the McLains abandon their camp? Did it burn or did they want to have a sporting camp and found the "trappers camp" to be inadequate? If there was no fire, why did the McLains call their new sporting camp "Phoenix"?

Albert and Will McLain ran Camp Phoenix from 1896 until 1900 although some evidence indicates the later date of 1904. They added two smaller buildings such that the 1899 visitor writing in *The Maine Sportsman* noted "a little clearing ...with its group of three new clean log cabins". Early on, the McLains partnered with a Mr. Hall (Luther?) from Patten. Later, the camp was run by Will. Albert's involvement was hampered by the sudden death of his young wife and the need to support seven children. Will became well known even in New York City, where he displayed a 53 inch moose head at the Sportsmen's Exposition, causing a sensation.



Famous Sourdnahunk

The only camp on this lake is

CAMP PHOENIX

It is a first-class sporting camp, where comfort as well as sport is always to be had. Reached by buckboard, from Patten or by canoe and steamer from Norcross. The rare hunting and phenomenal fishing in this region make this the all-edged resort of the Maine wilderness for sportsmen. Write for terms and dates to Patten, Me. May to September, and Lincoln, Me. December to May.

W. A. McLAIN, Prop'r.

This photo shows camp building before 1899.
Relatively little clearing has taken place.

CAMP PHOENIX (Nesowadnehunk Lake), Hall & McLain, Patten, Prop. Terms \$1.50 per day. Guides \$3 per day. B. & A. R. R. to Norcross, steamer to head of Ambajejus lake, canoe to mouth of Nesowadnehunk stream, team rest of way to lake. Or take B. & A. and P. & S. R. R.'s to Patten, buckboard via Shin pond and Trout Brook Farm, 52 miles, to camp. References. H. F. Farnham, Portland, Me.; E. W. Wiggin, care N. Y., N.H. & H. R. R., New Haven, Conn.

Describes early routes to camp. P&S RR refers to the Patten and Sherman Railroad, a spur line of BAR.



Closer view of the main camp building with porch, railings and "Camp Phoenix" added to original

CAMP PHOENIX

AT SOURDNAHUNK LAKE,

Is in the center of the Big Game Country. Trout fishing EXTRA FINE.

Appeared in March 1899

The Maine Sportsman



Later McLain era picture showing more clearing and added shed and buildings.



Same McLain buildings
Blanche Mulherrin and Bertha Page
with kittens.

McLain era scenes from *In the Maine Woods*, *The Maine Sportsman* and *In and Around Our Great Northern Wilderness*.

THE DAISEYS

"My father and I have operated Camp Phoenix since 1900 starting with a cook house and two cabins. We have grown steadily until we can now accommodate 30 guests. I know this growth has come through the people who have been here and recommended our camp to their friends. They are my father's friends and mine, and I hope you will be also". So wrote Arnold Daisey sometime between 1942, when he acquired the camp, and 1953, when his father Charles died. In all, the Daiseys owned and operated Camp Phoenix for 56 years and thus most of this story is theirs.

According to Ella Daisey Ireland whom I interviewed on November 26, 1994, the Daiseys were Irish and settled in Nicatou, presently known as Medway. George Augustus Daisey, born in 1851, was a river driver and guide. He was related to the Fowlers of Norcross, a notable family of the time. The old path along the West Branch from Medway to Norcross was known as Fowler's Carry. George's son, Charles, a central figure in this story, was born in 1868. Ella, one of Charles' six children, described him as an extremely independent and rugged individual. Born in Medway, he grew up along the West Branch at a time when logging activity came into prominence. He spent much of his time with his Fowler cousins in Norcross and eventually settled there with his first wife, Minnie Bruce Daisey.



George Daisey at 17 or 18. Note his right ear ring, an identifying mark in case of an accidental death.

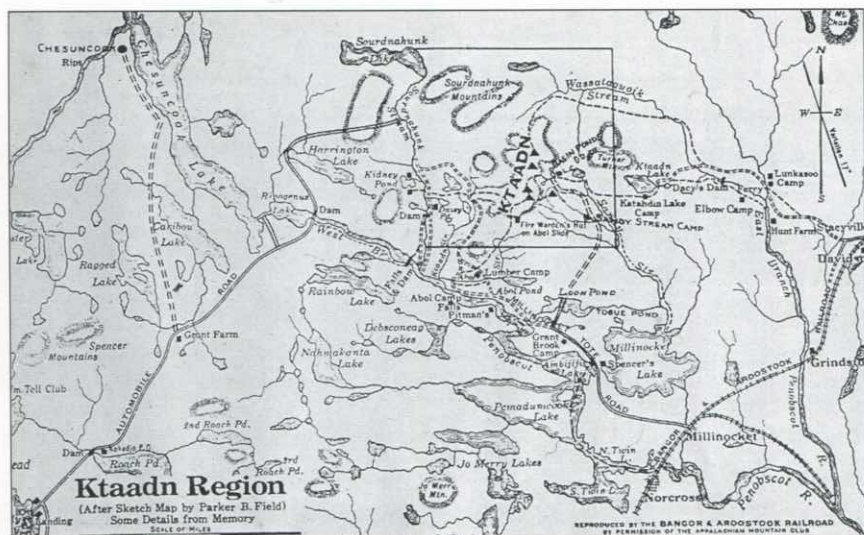


Charles in a studio pose, probably in his early 20's

Like most young men of the time, Charles worked on the drive, cruised for timber, guided and worked occasionally for the fledgling Great Northern Paper Company. But his independence and keen sense of thrift apparently created a strong need to part with the traditional role of employee, according to Ella. Between 1900 and 1904 (the accounts vary) and in his early 30's, Charles Daisey bought Camp Phoenix from Will McLain.

One can only speculate on his decision to undertake a risky and remote venture such as this. He had a family, his wife Minnie and two young sons, Fred and Arnold. And, as we have seen, Sourdnhunk Lake was 42 very difficult miles from Norcross, still primarily a water route, it being another 10 years or so before the Millinocket-Sourdnhunk Tote Road would open to summer traffic. On the other hand, the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad was in full operation, was actively promoting sporting activities in the region and had established Norcross as a "game center" along its route. Well heeled sports were arriving at the Norcross House and Hotel daily. Charles Daisey is listed as a Maine guide from Norcross in the 1899 Maine Sportsman. But why simply be a guide? Why not own a sporting camp?

If Charles was visionary he might have understood the potential of the Great Northern's proposed



Map from 1920's showing Turnpike Road from Greenville (lower left) to Sourdnaunk (upper center)
Also seen are Millinocket and Norcross (lower right) and their respective Tote Road and water route

Ripogenus Dam, to be located only five miles from Sourdnaunk Field, itself but another five miles to Camp Phoenix. Construction of this huge dam would require building a "Turnpike Road" from Greenville capable of conveying heavy construction equipment over a 45 mile distance. As it turned out, the road and dam were completed in 1915. Seven years later, the Duck Pond to Sourdnaunk Stream (Field) Road was put in. So, by 1922, the sixty mile distance from Greenville to a point within five miles of Camp Phoenix was traversed by a modern gravel road open to automobiles. Could Charles in 1900 have anticipated these events? By our modern standards of risk assessment, probably not. But, as an opportunist, he certainly did take advantage of these developments as they unfolded.

The Camp Phoenix which Daisey bought appears from the photographic record to have been a collection of "Lincoln Log" style cabins, rather closely strung down the shore from Slaughter Brook. Looking on the next page, we see the original McLain cook house/sleeping quarters or lodge at the upper left. To the upper right and behind the Daiseys, we see the lodge again and two additional smaller structures just as they appeared in the earlier McLain camp photos. This also coincides with the "group of three new, clean log cabins" noted in the 1899 *Maine Sportsman* article. Gone now is the "little clearing", as evidenced by the lawn in the Daisey photo at the right. Indeed, the additional four photos show considerable construction activity along the lake front

There appear to have been two building phases at Camp Phoenix. Charles constructed a series of at least eight closely grouped cabins right on the shore which basically replicated the smaller McLain buildings. This probably took place in the 1910's and 20's. Arnold, born in 1900 and making a career of Camp Phoenix, started major modifications in the 1920/1930's by replacing the older cabins with his own stockade design. He also built a large main eating lodge.



Original McLain era "lodge" with modifications



An older George Daisy with his grandsons Fred, on left, and Arnold, around 1910. Note original McLain structures in background.



The main lodge and seven cabins, including those added by Charles Daisey.



Same group, from the lake. Note breakwater to the left and outbuilding by the rear.



Same group of seven cabins, taken from breakwater. Remnants of it lie under our present dock.

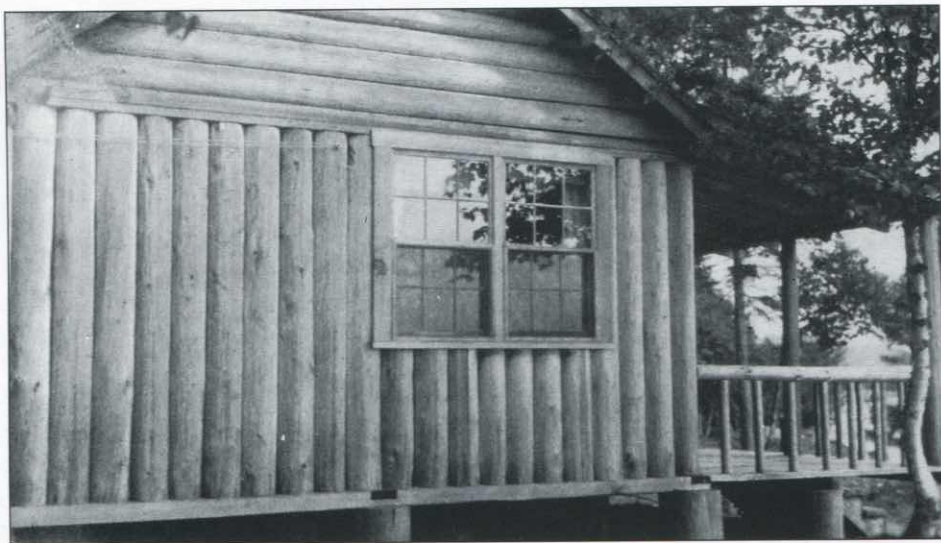


An eighth cabin under construction, suggesting that Charles Daisey built quite a few "Lincoln log" structures.

Daisey era scenes courtesy of Ella Daisey Ireland.



Photo provided by Ella Daisey Ireland showing the camp after Charles' expansion, probably in early 1920's. Note original McLain buildings to the left, extensive clearing of trees and Strickland Mountain in the background.



Arnold Daisey's characteristic "stockade" style of cabin which gradually replaced the McLain and Charles Daisey buildings. This photo was taken in the 1930's. Today it is cabin #6 and continues virtually unchanged, a testament to Arnold's skill.



You'll Find The Genuine Woods Life on Sourdnehunk Lake

Famous Camp Phoenix

OFFERS

The best hunting and fishing opportunities in the Aroostook country. Comfortable cabins, outlying camps, guides, canoes and numerous nearby waters to give variety.

For the vacationist the surroundings are unsurpassed for resting and recuperation. Splendid canoeing, mountain climbing and woods tramps.

There Is Good Fly-Fishing Throughout The Summer On Sourdnehunk

Our guests pronounce our table as being unusually good and our SPRING WATER as being an attraction in itself.

Write for information in detail and also for our list of references from people who regard Camp Phoenix as a resort par excellence.

CHARLES DAISEY

Norcross, Maine

This advertisement appeared in the 1917 issue of *In the Maine Woods*.

In terms of running Camp Phoenix in this early Daisey era, we have little first hand information. Ella's first memories began in the mid 1920's. It is known that Daisey kept on several of the McLain guides including Sid Ray, the Hale brothers (Elmer, Dan and Charles) and Gene and Maurice York. It is said that Charles' wife Minnie was the mainstay of the camp...chief cook and bottle washer. She is seen in the bottom left picture sitting on the porch between Charles, to her right, and an unknown individual to her left.

The year 1913 was calamitous for the Daiseys. Minnie Bruce Daisey was killed at a railroad crossing. She left Charles and their two sons, Arnold aged 13 and his younger brother Fred. Within a year or two Charles would marry Minnie's sister, Sarah Bruce. They would have four children: Charles, Jr. in 1916, Ella Katherine in 1918, Cora Ellen in 1920 and Merle in 1921. It is said that Sarah had little to do with the camp, leaving the management to Charles, his older sons and, eventually, his daughters. Coming as it did, one wonders why this crisis didn't doom the young enterprise. It serves as a testament to the Daisey family that they were able to endure this hardship. But with Charles in his mid 40's, clearly someone would have to come along and share the burden. And that individual turned out to be his oldest son.

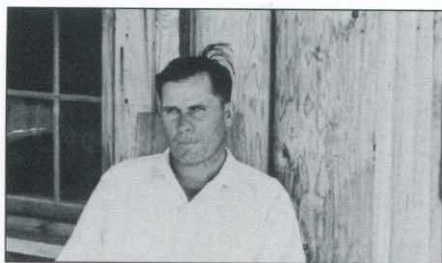


This is a Bicknell postcard dated August 29, 1910. It reads:
"Hope to stay longer with you next year".

W.P. Hall, 407 East 31st St. NYC



Wedding picture of Charles and Sarah Daisey in about 1915. He is 46, she is 35.



Arnold Daisey in about 1936. He is sitting on the porch of the second lodge. Note the unpainted logs.

FAMOUS CAMP PHOENIX	
OFFERS	
The best hunting and fishing opportunities in Maine. Comfortable cabins, outlying camps, guides, canoes and numerous nearby waters to give variety.	
THERE IS GOOD FLY-FISHING THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER ON SOURDNAHUNK	
Camps are reached from Greenville via Ripogenus Dam, over a first-class road.	
Our guests pronounce our table as being unusually good and our SPRING WATER as being an attraction in itself. Write for address of someone living near you that was here last year!	
CHARLES DAISEY & SON	GREENVILLE, MAINE

Ad from *In the Maine Woods* showing Arnold's co-ownership with Charles.

Arnold Rexford Daisey was the architect and builder of the "new" Camp Phoenix. In 1929 he became his father's partner in the camp. When Charles "retired" in the early 1940's, Arnold would be the sole owner until Camp Phoenix was sold to George Emerson in 1955. The camp was his passion and life work. We will return to him in due time.

During the 1910's and 20's, when Charles himself ran the camp, the experience must have been fairly rustic. As we have seen, the cabins were crowded together along the shore. He did build a "winter camp" located about where #11 is today. This was a more substantial insulated structure which allowed the Daiseys to stay well into cold weather in order to cut ice for the following summer. According to Ella, the family sometimes even wintered over, travelling out to Millinocket over the frozen Tote Road. During this time Charles was building up a considerable clientele. The best were those who came for the entire season, which was not unusual. One party even had his own cabin built. Charles' goal was to develop a base of loyal customers who would return every year. And in this he was extremely successful. Indeed, the arduous trip from Norcross only seemed to add to the enthusiasm of the hardy sports of the time. One, a Reverend Orville Petty of New Haven vividly described such a trip in the 1916 edition of *In the Maine Woods*:

"Up the West Branch to Sourdnahunk"

Nothing succeeds like excess; if you want the finest fishing go forty miles from Norcross. Several Yale men had summed it up in such words, words then strange, now strangely true. I learned that these same busy men had caught up with themselves by a few weeks on Lake Sourdnahunk every summer since the century began...Within a fortnight we had stepped off the train and into the woods at Norcross. We "bought the boat" from Fred Fowler and at 7am our "chartered ship" steamed away toward the northwest...put us ashore at the "head of the lake"...One lonely Indian greeted us, he was to be our guide. We pushed our canoe into the whirling waters of the West Branch...we had left twelve miles behind...The "carries" serve to straighten our legs and the running logs add a welcome hazard now and then...At the mouth of Sourdnahunk Stream we leave our canoe and plunge into the forest...We followed the "tote" road toward the north...some take the buckboard for "the lake". We chose the tonic of a twelve mile hike...We reached the lake when the sun was high, and what a wonderful scene crept into our souls - four sparkling miles of limpid beauty framed by mountains, hills and evergreens which "shoulder the sky". We lowered a canoe into the shining home stretch of our way and rested our feet. Two miles soon drifted behind us and Charley Daisey said "Welcome" in tones that even a tenderfoot could not misunderstand.



“The End of the Road “

This is a postcard dated September 16, 1939. Note autos, buckboard, garages and telephone pole.

Travel circumstances changed dramatically in 1922 when the Turnpike Road from Greenville to Ripogenus Dam was extended to Sourdnahunk Stream and the Millinocket Tote Road at present day Sourdnahunk Field. This brought vehicular traffic some 60 miles to within 5 miles of Camp Phoenix. Charles had already built a very rough road from this point of confluence to Sourdnahunk Lake. This was passable only by buckboard or, later, specially modified beach wagons. While Charles welcomed the improved access for his clients and his own access to the markets and services in Greenville, he worried that the public would gain the same access. Until now, the public water of Sourdnahunk was essentially Charles' private domain. He and his carefully cultivated clientele wanted it to remain that way. His solution? He placed a locked barricade, a chain, across the entrance to his road. It became known as “the end of the road”. He then installed a telephone between Camp Phoenix and “the end of the road”. An arriving sport would simply ring up and be met at the gate. There were several large garages providing safe storage for the sports' automobiles during their stays at camp. In the earliest days of this arrangement a buckboard would be dispatched from camp, but by the late 30's Charles bought three modified beach wagons to make the ten mile round trip from camp to “the end of the road”. Ella's husband was in charge of this shuttle fleet. By excluding the public in this way, Charles Daisey succeeded in creating a very private wilderness experience for his guests. There were no other camps or habitations on the lake, the quality of fishing was phenomenal, only fly fishing was allowed and his clientele were devoted. Charles could even regulate the lake water level by raising or lowering the gates at the Sourdnahunk Dam. Ella said that he kept a Reo Speedwagon at “the end of the road” which allowed him to cover the sixty miles to Greenville over Ripogenus Dam (he had his own gate key) in less than two hours. There he would replenish his larder with all sorts of basic and exotic food, charging the guests at least double, again according to Ella. And the guests paid willingly, it seemed. Charles had rules, including the exclusion of motor boats. Only canoes were allowed, most of them built by Arnold Daisey.

Finally, Charles Daisey had access to all the peripheral ponds including Little Sourdnahunk, Dwelley, Thissel, Telos and Coffelos, with camps at each. In short, he was able to isolate Camp Phoenix from the outside world. This would change dramatically in 1942 when “the chain came down”, presumably in response to public pressure. With the public's access to Sourdnahunk Lake came motor boats, a development so fundamentally distasteful to the 74 year old Charles Daisey that he “retired”.



The Lodge looking northwest.
Note winter camp to right.



The Lodge from the front.



Arnold, Fred and Charles Daisey, Jr.
near the Lodge.

By the late 1920s Arnold Daisey began to change the face of Camp Phoenix. He had a saw mill nearby and plenty of spruce logs. From available photographs it appears that the first major change was the construction of the first "lodge". This was a very large building placed directly south of the winter camp, in the same location as our present lodge. It was built in a "stockade" style with walls of vertical spruce logs, the gable ends filled in with horizontal courses. This style contrasted with the "Lincoln Log" cabins built by the McLains and Charles. It would be repeated in all the structures Arnold built, which were many. The lodge was a gathering and eating place for the guests and provided an upstairs quarters for the many guides who worked at camp. Charles had a room in the lodge.

At the same time Arnold began to demolish the old McLain and Charles buildings, replacing them with more widely spaced cabins of his characteristic design. In this way Phoenix was gradually transformed into the traditional fishing camp which was seen all over Maine in the 1930's.

In October, 1931 the first lodge burned down. The fire began around a stovepipe in Charles' room. He was there with a crew cutting wood for the following season and, according to Ella, narrowly escaped with his life. It was a total loss. Nevertheless, a crew was rounded up in Greenville and the lodge was completely rebuilt over the winter, ready for the traditional camp opening on May 1st. It replicated the first lodge with the addition of a large fieldstone fireplace and a more finished appearance of the dining room.

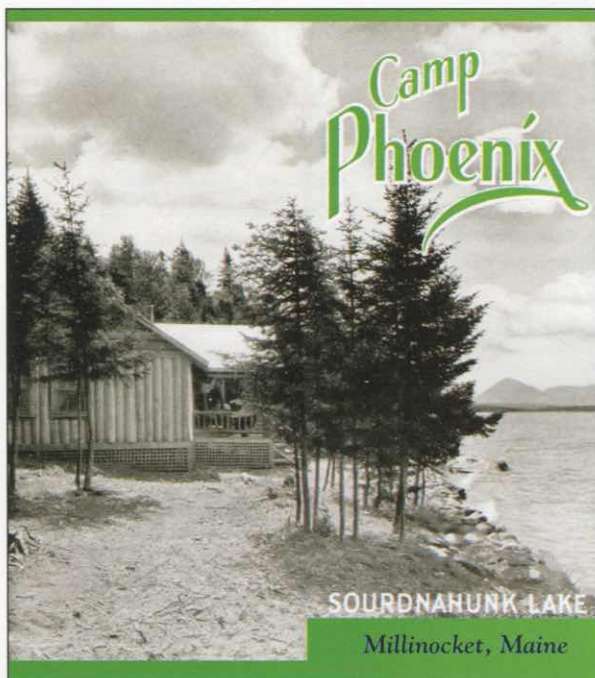
Running Camp Phoenix was a family affair. Ella told me that over successive teen years she was a kitchen girl and a waitress. The other Daisey daughters worked there as well. The basic crew consisted of cabin girls, a laundress, two cooks, two waitresses, a chore boy and a teamster for the horses. And, of course, there were guides. In the earlier days they had a separate cabin but with the new lodge they had quarters on the top floor. At capacity, the camp typically accommodated about 40 people and all meals were taken at the lodge. A garden provided fresh produce, supplemented by Charles' twice weekly forays into Greenville. Three cows and a coop full of chickens provided fresh milk and eggs. At some point Fred, Arnold's younger brother and a master electrician, brought in a generator and wiring for lighting.

Ella recalled her Camp Phoenix years fondly. It was hard work but with plenty of “play time”. She recalled many a hike up Strickland Mountain, behind the camp. There was a good trail in those days and they built a platform at the summit for viewing. She remembered one summer in particular when a sport brought his chauffeur along. After leaving the car at “the end of the road,” the chauffeur, having nothing else to do, stayed in the guides quarters, adding an element of social interest to Ella’s summer.

Arnold’s conversion of the “old camp to the new camp” probably went on for eight or ten years, extending into the mid 1930’s and resulting essentially in what we see today. Ella did mention that he built four “housekeeping cabins on the top of the hill”. Two of these survived as today’s #1A and #2A. A third was moved down the hill and became today’s cabin #1. Although undated, the brochure shown below and on the cover very probably represents the completion of Arnold’s building efforts and also reflects his increasing role as the principal manager of Camp Phoenix.

1937 was a significant year in the camp’s history. Charles had leased the camp property since his original purchase from the McLains. Deeds recorded in Piscataquis County show a number of transfers of ownership starting in 1844. The specific land in question involved the southwestern quarter of Township 5 Range 10 (T5R10), totalling 9 square miles or 5558 acres. The Stricklands of Bangor had bought it for 48 cents an acre. In 1909, the then owners (Katahdin Pulp and Paper Company) sold the property to George Keith and heirs of Brockton, Massachusetts. In 1912, Charles Daisey acquired a 10 year lease at \$25 a year for: “A square lot of land in the extreme southwest corner of the southwest quarter of...T5R10...the shore of Sourdnahunk Lake constituting the west line thereof, and the south line of said township constituting the south line of said lot, said lot containing about twenty (20) acres, more or less, together with the buildings thereon, known as “Camp Phoenix”. On May 10, 1937 at 3:25 PM, Charles Daisey bought this 20 acres from the Keiths for \$500. “That”, said Ella, “was the happiest day of his life”.

And happy for us. As Percival Baxter acquired lands in later years, Camp Phoenix remained intact.



Following Charles' retirement and the coming down of the chain at "the end of the road" in 1942, Arnold assumed full ownership. He stayed on for "a few more years" until Camp Phoenix was sold in 1955. From the Daisey perspective, things were not the same: "Everything changed when the chain came down", said Ella, a bit wistfully. A vacationing public had found Sourdnhunk Lake. Motor boats came in, new logging roads increased general public access to the outlying ponds, and a "public landing" was established between the dam and Camp Phoenix.

GEORGE AND BERYL EMERSON

The Emersons were from Livermore Falls, Maine. George, after starting in with International Paper and Bath Iron Works where he became a fully licensed electrician, settled into the electrical merchandise business and joined the Masons. In about 1947 a group of them went to Camp Phoenix and "I got taken away". While there he spoke to Arnold about the possibility of selling. He got an emphatically negative reply. George then sold his electrical store and got into the TV business. In the fall of 1955 he wrote to Arnold for reservations and just mentioned that he loved the place. According to George, the gist of Arnold's reply was, "if you love it that much, you can buy it". So, the deal was quickly completed and the Emersons opened camp in May of 1956.

In my interview with them, George and Beryl admitted that they had no idea how to run a sporting camp. But then, George wryly remarked that he didn't know how to run a store either.



George and Beryl Emerson...and friend



View of Emerson era lodge and cabins from the lagoon or "boat pool." Wood and canvas boats with outboards replaced canoes. Boats built in Veazie. Today's are fiberglass copies.

Beryl, who was regularly employed as a nurse said that it "seemed like a good idea". They had two children, the older being Linda, aged 13, and they managed to successfully carry out their "good idea" for the next 16 seasons. It was very clear to me in talking with them that despite their many challenges and hurdles, they loved every minute of it. George's only regret, he said, was in selling Camp Phoenix in 1971 at a time when, despite all the changes in northern Maine and the country, things were going very, very well.

At the time of their purchase, the Emersons found that things "were in pretty tough shape". During the first three years most of the effort went into leveling the cabins and replacing all the beds and mattresses. Gradually, change came about. A lagoon or "boat pool" was made to provide a protected area for the many outboard motorboats now in use. Afternoon northwesterlies were just as fierce then as now. They inherited eight Arnold Daisey cabins on the shore and four on the hill. Of these last, two were slightly relocated and remained as #1A and #2A, as we have seen. A third was dragged down the hill, becoming cabin #1. The fourth was subjected to the last fire in our history, burned on a New Year's Eve out on the frozen lake. George and Elmer Knowlton, a retired game warden from Millinocket, built four additional cabins up on the hill which are currently cabins #3A through #6A. The old winter camp was torn down in 1961, replaced by present cabin #11, which the Emersons occupied. Lastly, two cabins were built in 1970 just north of the lagoon and are now #12 and #13.

Of all the changes, the most striking was the change in the camp color. George loved red and during his tenure all of the structures were painted red with white trim, as they are today. Ella Daisey Ireland, who had not returned to Camp Phoenix since the 1955 sale, was stunned when I told her. I was a bit nervous when she returned for the 1996 Centennial, but after an inspection tour she pronounced approvingly that the place looked good.

The Emersons sold Camp Phoenix in 1971 at a time when business was good ... “Just when we were starting to make a profit”, as Beryl said. But times were evolving and there were profound North Woods changes on the horizon. George noted that he introduced some housekeeping cabins because many visitors could not afford the traditional American Plan of all meals provided. Camping came into its own and Baxter State Park grew as a free public recreational resource. With the demise of the traditional log drives, logging roads proliferated rapidly, allowing public access to formerly remote and inaccessible locations. The 100 year era of the traditional Maine sporting camp was beginning to wane.



Advertising brochure from the Emerson era



Another view from the lagoon facing northwest toward location of today's cabins #12 and #13.

In addition to the lagoon, George Emerson built the small pond behind #13.



Looking south along today's cabins #4, #5 and #6.

The small auto path was placed behind the cabins in the late 1980's. This is a good example of Daisey brown contrasting with Emerson red.

SUBSEQUENT CAMP PHOENIX OWNERS

Irving and Claire Sally of Attleboro, Massachusetts bought Camp Phoenix in 1971 and operated it for eight years. In 1979 Harold and Patricia Burbank of Epping, New Hampshire bought it and operated it for five years. In 1984 the camp was bought by Richard and Carolyn LeDuc of Sherman, Maine. During this time, Sourdnhunk Lake came to be recognized as one of the premier brook trout fisheries in Maine, with considerable attention in the press. One such enthusiast was Ralph "Bud" Leavitt, a well known outdoor writer for the Bangor Daily News; who wrote the following article at the time of the LeDuc purchase:

A Maine sporting camp is an institution totally unlike any other operation I know within the continental limits. Stated simply, a sporting camp as we in Maine know it consists of a collection of cottages or camps, located in the vicinity of a central structure that houses a kitchen, dining room and something close to being called a recreation room. Originated in Maine, the term "sporting" conveys the idea of a gay life of drinking and carousing...and "camp", being singular, gives the impression of a single building.

I imagine that "sporting" became part of the name because guides call their fisherman and hunters "sports". So in Maine you are a sport even though you are a man of the cloth and the world's most reserved person to boot—and your spouse, much to the amusement of some, is a "sporting lady". Anyhow, the Maine sporting camp, including the "sports" and "sporting ladies", is a part of a great and wonderful old tradition. Year after year, one hears that Mr. Jones is back, his 51st summer return to Maine. Or Mrs. Jones, a widow now, is carrying on the tradition and will be in camp for the 33rd time next week. That's a part of the sporting camp tradition, a Maine treasure, I believe. Sporting camps often change hands. New owners take over and a long tradition continues to be carried on.

Recently, Camp Phoenix at Nesowadnehunk changed hands. Harold and Pat Burbank of Epping, NH sold the old property to Carolyn and Richard LeDuc of Bolton, Mass. Phoenix is one of Maine's oldest and certainly best known sporting camps. My first visit there goes back to the days when the camps were owned by Charles Daisey. Located 56 miles from Greenville and 40 miles north of Millinocket, Nesowadnehunk remains one of the best wild trout lakes in all of Maine. The lake has no hot spots, as such, when it comes to fly fishing trout. Cornell Cove remains a fresh memory and an evening there with Bob Elliott, the one-time and retired director of Maine tourism. Elliott fished a single hook Black Ghost and the orange-tinted sides of brookies could not resist smashing or passing by the flies we cast. There are other places on the lake where fishing at times is the equal of the "old days". Coxabaxis Cove, Caribou Cove, Finches Point, Proctor Point, each have their moments when trout fishing is what it was way back when Grandpop made it a habit to fish the lovely old lake.

We are happy the LeDucs have elected to carry on the long tradition of Camp Phoenix. Through the last 75 years or so, the camps have maintained a high standard of operation and this in part has been because of people the likes of Daisey, George Emerson, Jr. and Pat Burbank. Now the outfitting becomes a responsibility to be shared by Carolyn and Richard LeDuc. The LeDucs and their two sons, Levy, 7, and Taggy, 6, have taken over at Camp Phoenix. We wish them success and the good life that goes hand in hand with operating an old and historic Maine business, the sporting camp.

CAMP PHOENIX

*a Top Spot for
"Brookies" on*



NESOWADNEHUNK LAKE

come fish at the "Trout Factory" in the
ambience of Mt. Katahdin and Doubletop

Fly Fishing - 14" to 18" Brookies taken daily
American Plan and Housekeeping Cottages
Wilderness with all the amenities of home
Hiking - central to trails of Mt. Katahdin and
Baxter State Park

Boat Rentals -- Dining Room
Swimming -- Games & Activities

<p>Open May - Oct. FREE BROCHURE (207) 365-7229</p>	<p>Dick & Carolyn LeDuc P.O. Box 210TP Millinocket, ME. 04462</p>
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THE TROUT FACTORY

Over the years the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game has conducted fish surveys at Sourdnehunk Lake. That done in August, 1956 stated that..."Sourdnehunk Lake should be managed exclusively for brook trout. This is one of the few large lakes where there are practically no competing species and where other conditions are very favorable for brook trout production. Excellent fishing is enjoyed throughout the season and undoubtedly will continue as long as competency fishes are not introduced...this can best be accomplished by prohibiting the use or possession of live fish as bait. The outlet produces all the young trout needed to keep the take well stocked. The fishway must be properly maintained to allow the trout to migrate up and down. The small inlets and shore spawning also contribute brook trout to the fishery. Stocking hatchery fish in this lake is not necessary under present conditions and fishing pressure".

The historic FFO or fly fishing only rule has made this quality water possible and is emphasized in this undocumented article:

"Biologists call this water 'the trout factory'...experienced Nesowadnehunk fishermen feel June is the best month but fishing remains steady throughout the season, with the exception of heat spells in August. In June, Hexagenia mayflies hatch, bringing big brookies to the surface for such a mealy mouthful. Wiggle nymphs and comparaduns, both about 1 1/4 inches long, work well. The nymphs should have the same dressing as the Flick March Brown. Comparaduns should have deer-hair tails and wings, yellowish-tan body, brown ribbing and red game cock legs. Other patterns for this water would be the Black Ghost, Gray Ghost, Warden's Worry, Slaymaker's Little Brook Trout, Muddler Minnow, Hare's Ear, Zug Bug, Flick March Brown Nymph casual dress, Grasshopper, Hornberg, Elk Hair Caddis and Flick March Brown dry fly, all in a variety of sizes."

"Perhaps the best wild trout fishing, day in and day out, in the northeast. A fly fishing paradise!"
David Lowrey

SUPERB FAMILY RECREATION
Typically, the best fly fishing occupies a few hours in the mornings and evenings, leaving the entire day for the family to take advantage of the incomparable features of Baxter Park. Hiking, swimming, picnicking amidst Maine's most spectacular mountain scenery.

PHOENIX IS IRREPLACEABLE
A parcel of fee simple owned land engulfed in an ocean of Baxter Park and paper company wilderness with cabins immediately on the best fly fishing water in the state.

WILDLIFE
Deer and moose are daily visitors by the dozens of the cabins and the wilderness here hosts hundreds of species of birds. No place in Maine has more abundant and easily seen wildlife.

AMENITIES IN THE WILDERNESS
All cabins have full baths, kitchens and are furnished. Appliances are provided and septic and water systems are newly constructed and engineered with this special environment firmly in mind.


EXCELLENT ACCESS
Road access brings one to Phoenix through the lovely scenery of Baxter State Park. Roads are well groomed in winter providing an expansive network of cross-country ski and snowmobile trails.

Two Registered Maine Guides dedicated to fly fishing formed Phoenix Partners, and we are looking for a few kindred spirits and their families to share this amazing place.

Our grandchildren will still gather here to tell the traditional stories and experience the camaraderie of the woods.

Write to us or call. We look forward to hearing from you.


Contact
Bill Holland
of
PHOENIX PARTNERS
Owner - Broker

 **NORTHERN ASSOCIATES INC.**

Office: 207-695-2255
Home: 207-695-3884
FAX: 207-695-4459

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P.O. Box 564
Greenville, Maine 04441

trout factory



Phoenix
on
Nesowadnehunk Lake
at
Baxter State Park

PHOENIX PARTNERS

The LeDucs sold Camp Phoenix in 1988 and thus began a period of controversy and contention. The times themselves were partly responsible in that the word "development" had become a flash point in the debate between the environmental and real estate communities. Paper companies and their lands, long assumed to be stable and locally owned, were being acquired by large corporations "from away", some even multinational. Traditional use and the assumption of free access to local people were threatened. The paper business economy was in a serious downturn. For people from Maine and elsewhere who could afford it, there was an urgency to "own a piece of the Maine Woods before it disappears forever". Also, Baxter State Park was anxious. Acquired by the unique vision of Percival Baxter as a 200,000 acre island of wildness in a literal forest of private property, the BSP Authority feared a rising movement of private land sale and development along its borders, threatening Governor Baxter's original intent.

Into this mix came three men with a plan for Camp Phoenix. Two developers, Bill Holland and Gary Merrill, and a consultant, Richard Anderson, wanted to do a "condominium conversion" at Camp Phoenix. This required the approval of the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) which would include new electric generators and a new septic system. Significantly, and as we shall see, LURC rules required developers to demonstrate adequate access to their property. Why a condo? Because as Bill Holland said, "Back at the start of 1988 when we bought Phoenix, we couldn't legally create individual lots beneath the cabins, so we created something that is technically a condo arrangement - which just means privately owned dwellings on shared land".

Rightly or wrongly, the idea of a condominium (with the often associated "time-share") on the shore of one of the most traditional, remote and productive

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BAXTER PARK / NESOWADNEHUNK LAKE

"THE ESSENCE OF MAINE"

CAMP PHOENIX
A sporting camp complex since 1900 on renowned Nesowadnehunk Lake, is currently in the "Phase" process to allow each cabin to be sold separately.

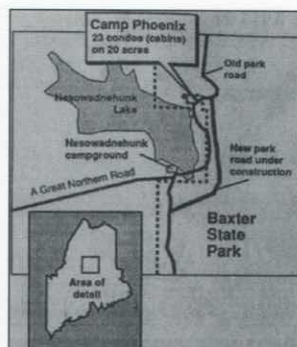
"PERHAPS THE BEST WILD THING YOU'VE EVER SEEN DAY IN AND DAY OUT IN THE NORTHWEST. A FLORISSANT PARADISE." Success

HIS IS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY.

PRESALE! REFUNDABLE RESERVATION DEPOSITS BEING ACCEPTED

PRE-SALE PRICES STARTING AT \$49,900.

One of many advertisements in the late 1980's



New Park road bypasses old west entrance and non Park land. Today this road connects to Phoenix.

trout waters in Maine sparked an immediate storm of controversy which was widely circulated in the press. In addition, Baxter State Park officials were stunned. Authority chairman James Tierney, the state's attorney general, was incredulous, according to one publication. BSP director Buzz Caverly was quoted as saying, "I didn't believe it would progress as fast as it did. I'm sitting back gazing at what kind of threat it poses to the park...We're being encircled...We're going to have a difficult road ahead of us to maintain our trust obligations (under the will of the park donor) at the borders. It will take deep thought, negotiations and discussions. Baxter is very vulnerable in the Nesowadnehunk area."

The Achilles heel of the development plan was the assumption that "the park roads would be available to him (Bill Holland) and the people who eventually would purchase the camps". However, Park rules forbade vehicles taller than 9 feet or wider than 7 feet from using the narrow park roads. Construction equipment necessary to complete the conversion exceeded this requirement. The BSP Authority turned the project down, much to director Caverly's relief. "If it had gone the other way, a strong precedent would have been established for waiving park rules".

With this development and the economic unfeasibility of building a separate access road away from Park property, Phoenix Partners amended their original development application of September 2, 1988 to a request for seasonal residences (non-commercial). This was approved by LURC on November 3, 1989. Baxter State Parks fears must have been calmed, for it is at this point that the most recent chapter of the Camp Phoenix history begins.

THE COLT INCIDENT



Colt .45: The Peacemaker

Were it not for a twist of fate, Camp Phoenix might never have come into its present ownership. In fact, the first intended sale by Phoenix Partners was to a Harold Colt of the Hartford, Connecticut firearms family. The story is rooted in Baxter State Park lore and worth the telling.

The Colts had a long association with Kidney Pond, starting over 100 years ago. An association with the actress Ethel Barrymore adds some interesting spice. The following is taken from Edmund Ware Smith's *Upriver and Down: Stories from the Maine Woods* in a chapter called "Trout from Still Waters":

"Many years ago, the Colt family (firearms) of Hartford, into which Ethel Barrymore had married, built a camp on a pine-clad point on Kidney Pond. Miss Barrymore liked bowling, so they had an alley installed...In the early 1900's the Colts sold their camp, alley and all, and the new owner moved it across the ice to the north shore of the pond. That was the beginning of Kidney Pond Camps. Host to fishermen for half a century, the camp has reached a peak of tasteful development under the direction of its present owner, Charles Lipscomb. It was Charley who had the inspiration to cut up Ethel Barrymore's bowling alley into the tabletops from which you are served your fried trout in the camp's central dining room."

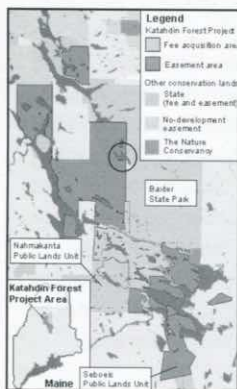
This, then, leads into the following excerpt from an article appearing in the October 18, 1996 issue of the *Maine Times*:

"The Park lost an important parcel a few years earlier when firearms heir Harold Colt decided against acquiring Camp Phoenix, a private sporting camp on Nesowadnehunk Lake at the northwestern border of the Park. He intended to leave the property to BSP at his death. Colt had spent many decades summering at the old Kidney Pond sporting camp that was privately run within the Park's borders until 1987. At that time, Colt fought against Park officials' successful effort to put the sporting camp on more of a wilderness footing, eliminating such amenities as flush toilets. Unable to have his conveniences, Colt refused to make further trips to the Park. Still, he was ready to buy Camp Phoenix until the owners reportedly raised the sale price significantly when he arrived to sign papers. Colt walked away from the deal and died not long afterward."

CAMP PHOENIX TODAY

Word of the sale of Camp Phoenix as individual “seasonal residences” spread quickly. For some, it was an opportunity to come back to a place they had visited years before and had never forgotten. For others, it was a chance to own a camp for the first time in their lives. Many were drawn by the fishing opportunities. Still others valued the hiking and canoeing experience. Some simply wanted peace, quiet, and a chance to be in a natural place far away from a demanding work schedule. Whatever the motivation, the community we have today, known as the Camp Phoenix Owners Association, rather than “condo”, takes very seriously its responsibility to preserve the old sporting camp and the present good relations with its neighbors. In many ways, the evolution of changes at Camp Phoenix and the diversity of people it has brought together with a common purpose mirror the efforts of a wide array of other groups active in the northern Maine Woods today. Our current membership reflects the entire political spectrum, from ardent traditionalist to outspoken conservationist. At the heart of the ongoing debate over present and future activity in the North Woods is the delicate and shifting balance between development on the one hand and preservation of the equally delicate and threatened resources of wildness and traditional use on the other. Whatever our differences, simply being at Camp Phoenix and Sourdnaunk Lake relegates them to insignificance, so profound and overwhelming is the place itself. If one just stops to think about the health of our wild breeding brook trout population, a resource almost unique in Maine and the eastern United States, and the chain of critically related natural links which makes that possible, our differences of opinion pale as long as we can maintain access and fulfill our human responsibility to this beautiful and ancient survivor. Traditional trout fishing and conservation can coexist and are indeed interdependent.

At this writing, several players have taken the stage as the North Woods drama and debate play on. Of these, the most directly involved are The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Society of Maine, The Appalachian Mountain Club and The Trust for Public Land. The first has played the largest role in lands directly affecting Camp Phoenix and Sourdnaunk Lake; that story is worth the telling and is taken from the Conservancy web site:



Areas in dark gray are under conservation easement.
Sourdnaunk Lake is circled.

August 27, 2002 – Great Northern Paper, Inc. and The Nature Conservancy today announced an unprecedented partnership designed to protect both jobs and forestland around Mount Katahdin. The non-profit conservation group has agreed to provide low-cost, long-term financing for Great Northern Paper. The company will place a conservation easement on 200,000 acres of forestland around Mount Katahdin, which will guarantee public access, traditional recreational uses, sustainable forestry, and no future development. In addition, the company will transfer 41,000 acres in the fabled Debsconeague Lakes wilderness area to the conservation group...In the agreement, The Nature Conservancy is purchasing \$50 million of existing loans to Great Northern Paper, retiring \$14 million of it and refinancing the balance at very competitive rates.

With this one act, virtually the entire perimeter of Sourdnahunk Lake and all of the land west to Chesuncook Lake was permanently protected from development, with the Forest Society of Maine acting as land steward.

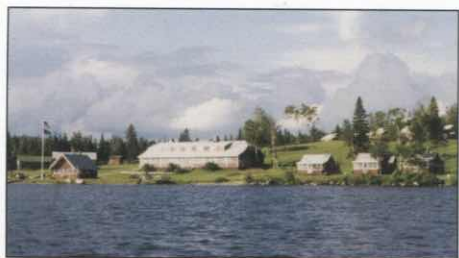


Moosehead, Maine's largest lake,
from Greenville

But further to the west, at old and equally historic Moosehead Lake, another sort of drama was unfolding. In 1998, Plum Creek Timber Company of Seattle, Washington bought 908,000 acres of Maine timberland from Sappi Fine Paper North, a subsidiary of South African Pulp and Paper International. At the time, Plum Creek said they had no development plans, but would negotiate by fee purchase or easement for conservation purposes. In August, 2005 Plum Creek announced its proposal to build a development of

975 house lots and 2 resorts on 421,000 of the original acres. A direct meteor hit could not have set off more immediate and lasting reverberations. Plum Creek had transformed from Timber Company to Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT). Both local Greenville residents and State of Maine officials were at first stunned and then perplexed. Nothing on this magnitude had ever happened before and the implications were huge. While promising to stabilize the economic base of Greenville, the original proposal could forever alter the character of the North Woods. If visions of time-shares at Camp Phoenix bothered officials at Baxter State Park, this plan rattled cages in every corner of the state.

Fortunately, Maine has a solid history of negotiating sensitive land issues through a variety of organizations, both governmental and non-profit. As we have seen previously, the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) has the final say in any proposed use of the unorganized Maine territories. Plum Creek must gain LURC approval before proceeding. To date, two revised plans have been submitted, influenced by a "Conservation Framework" created and endorsed by a coalition of The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Society of Maine, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. Still another plan, a further revision of the revision, has been put forth by the Natural Resources Council of Maine, a watchdog group based in Augusta which has a long record of protecting the Maine environment from a variety of assaults. In the end, it is hoped that all parties can come together in, as an official of The Nature Conservancy has said, "providing permanent protection for high value conservation areas, maintaining intact working forests, assuring public access and, significantly, removing from development consideration areas of greatest concern to conservation scientists."



The porch of the old Lodge, now "Loafing Site", is a place to renew friendships.



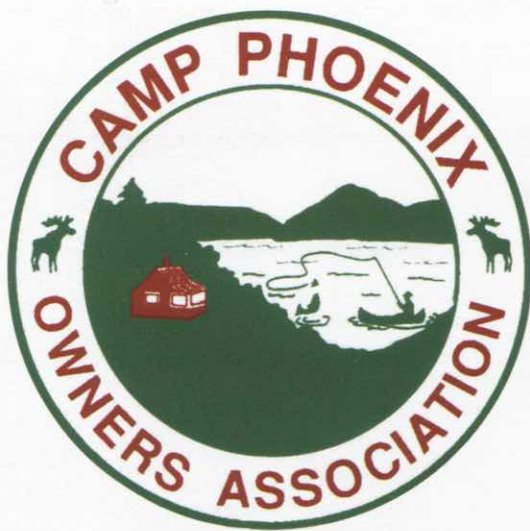
Community spirit gets all the jobs done



The silence and splendor of Winter



Dream days of casting for Brook Trout




EPILOGUE

Camp Phoenix today is an association of individuals and families who count themselves fortunate to have found a place which we hope time and "civilization" will forget. The land around Sourdnahunk Lake still seems remote. To the east, it is sheltered by the sheer bulk of Baxter State Park. Although it is possible to reach the south entrance to the Park's perimeter road in only one and one half hours from Bangor, the last 22 miles to camp over the old Millinocket-Sourdnahunk Tote Road are reassuringly slow. During that anticipatory hour in to camp, passing under the sentinel eyes of Pamola, Thoreau Spring, Witherle Ravine, The Owl, OJI, Coe, Doubletop, Center, and, finally, Strickland, one feels a contraction of human and geologic time. The effect is one of kinship and belonging. Arriving at Camp Phoenix, one has a sense of having come home: the sweep of the grassy hill down to the long expanse of the lake, the first scent of warm spruce upon opening the cabin door, the smiles of great friends not seen in a while. And in contrast to the close confines of the old Tote Road, time and distance in this place take on infinite dimensions. Where else could you paddle out on a still lake night and feel suspended in space, so perfectly are the stars reflected on the water? Where else could you casually bend over and pickup a 500 million year old animal fossil embedded in a piece of rock? Where else could your fly rod telegraph to you the powerful, eternal survival instinct of a wild and primitive Sourdnahunk Brook Trout?

We have been given a gift of this place, rooted in the primal forces which shaped the earth and passed on to us by caring hands for safekeeping. We treasure it, for in this year of 2007 it is truly unique. As we try to envision the kind of world our grandchildren will experience, we should recall these words of Henry David Thoreau, "*In Wildness is the preservation of the World*", words profound enough then and even more profound for us now.



A Song for Camp Phoenix



Where the winds always blow and the wildflowers grow
On the green grassy hill of Camp Phoenix
In the lake loon calls sound and the speckled trout abound
And the mountains watch over Camp Phoenix

~ Chorus ~

Oh you take the north road
And I'll take the south road
And I'll be at Phoenix before you
Where the winds always blow and the wildflowers grow
On the green grassy hill of Camp Phoenix

Where the shy gentle deer come to drink without fear
And the moose brings her calf out to greet us
Where the swallows love to nest, where we come for peaceful rest
To the green grassy hill of Camp Phoenix

~ Chorus ~

Where the deep forest trails lead us through mossy vales
And to stone capped peaks on the mountains
But soon we'll return, for when we're away we yearn
For the green grassy hill of Camp Phoenix

~ Chorus ~

Where the flute songs of thrush break the sweet evening hush
And the mayflies flutter on the water
Where golden sunsets light on our cabins red and white
And the moon rises over Camp Phoenix

~ Chorus ~

Cookie Horner '93



Sung to the tune of "Loch Lomond"



August 1996 Camp Phoenix Centennial Celebration photo taken in front of the Lodge.
In addition to current owners, Ella Daisy Ireland, daughter of Charles Daisey,
is seated to right of Camp Phoenix banner.



Two "old guides" in a three-legged race



The author and his wife in centennial dress

Christopher S. Campbell, PhD is Professor of Plant Systematics at the University of Maine and member of Loafing Site (The Lodge) at Camp Phoenix. This original article added greatly to my understanding and appreciation of “the place and its inhabitants”. I present it with but minor editing. Thanks, Chris.

SOME NATURAL HISTORY OF NESOWADNEHUNK

by Christopher S. Campbell

Nesowadnehunk connotes a body of water and its 16 mile outflow or stream which is located on the western border of today's Baxter State Park (BSP). Like the most dominant landform in the region, *Ktaadn* (meaning "highest land") and which we call Katahdin, its name has evolved to Sourdnehunk, by which it is better known. Most of this account, spanning the past 600 million years, deals with time long before Sourdnehunk Lake existed. If this time frame were compressed into a year, the past 100 years would represent only 5 seconds. For almost all of this 600 million years, the Sourdnehunk Lake region has been very different from its current state. During the first third of this time it was covered by ocean. Following this, continental drift and mountain building uplifted the landscape into a massive mountain range. The next 360 million years eroded much of the terrain. Finally, glacial ice crept down from the northwest, covering our area with more than a mile of ice and remolding much of its topography. Sourdnehunk Lake itself is probably the product of glacial action. Even the forests that stretch out in all directions, the northern Maine woods, did not take their present form until the past 300 years.

We will begin with a description of bedrock, the foundation of the natural terrestrial world. This solid rock or ledge underlies loose rock and soil, and dictates the shape of landscapes. Bedrock of the BSP region was formed between 600 and 360 million years ago. Glaciations in the past one million years have rounded mountain summits, carved valleys and ravines, and deposited ridges of sand and gravel. Starting around 400 million years ago, animals and plants emerged from their aquatic beginnings to invade the land. The diversity of animal and plant life is too great to catalog adequately in a brief overview of natural history such as this. Therefore, we will focus on six important and characteristic species of the Sourdnehunk region, including 3 animals (brook trout, loon, moose) and 3 plants (balsam fir, mountain shadbush, sweet gale).

BEDROCK GEOLOGY

Both sedimentary and igneous rocks occur in the BSP region (Caldwell 1972). Sourdnehunk Lake sits in sedimentary rocks referred to as the Seboomook Group, which are the oldest bedrocks in the region, dating to 600 to 400 million years ago. They were formed by accumulation, compaction and cementation of mud into slate and shale, sand into sandstone, and gravel into conglomerates. These processes occurred through a long period of river delta formation and marine sedimentation, as suggested by the occurrence in these rocks of fossil marine organisms such as brachiopods, corals and mollusks. The presence of these creatures and other evidence indicate that the area was covered by ocean during the early Paleozoic Era.

It is easy to find impressions of fossilized brachiopods in sedimentary rocks along the lake shore. A large conglomerate rock directly in front of cabin #3 is almost covered with fossils of *Poeciolepis flavellites*. These fossils strongly resemble clam shells, although they are not very closely related to clams. Brachiopods flourished in Paleozoic oceans, but were greatly reduced in numbers by a mass extinction around 250 million years ago.

Igneous bedrocks in the BSP region formed from the cooling of magma, a molten material pushed up from several miles below the earth's surface by volcanic activity. The nature of these rocks depends on how quickly the magma cooled, and on mineral composition. The Traveler Mountains and the area west and south of these peaks are overlaid by an igneous bedrock called Traveler rhyolite, which was produced by volcanic activity in the Lower Devonian Period, a little more than 400 million years ago. The hills and peaks of the Traveler Mountain region, including those closest to Sourdnhunk Lake (Strickland and Center Mountains) are not the peaks of the volcanoes, but their eroded roots or remnants. This granitic rock is quite dark when freshly exposed and weathers to various shades of white, light gray, blue-white, or brown to red when stained by iron deposits.

The youngest igneous bedrock in BSP and adjacent areas formed about 360 million years ago in the Middle Devonian Period and is called Katahdin granite. This rock covers roughly the southern half of BSP and extends further to the south. It makes up the higher mountains visible from Sourdnhunk Lake: Doubletop, OJI, Coe, The Brothers and Katahdin itself. Katahdin granite comes in two forms, pink and gray. The former makes up the bedrock at higher elevations and the latter at intermediate and lower ones. The difference in color is due to the presence of white or cream-colored feldspar in the gray granite and pink feldspar in the pink form. The color of most Katahdin granite is obscured by weathering or a mask of lichens.

About 400 million years ago, the North American continent collided with the Eurasian and lifted the eastern edge of our continent out of the ocean. This portion of North America has not been covered by ocean since that time. The major geological event since emergence from the ocean has been erosion. Water (frost, streams and rivers), landslides and winds have eroded away perhaps 10,000 feet of bedrock. Granitic bedrock in the BSP region is harder than sedimentary bedrock, is more resistant to erosion and thus forms the present-day mountains. The lesser peaks in the southern part of BSP were at one time covered by the pink Katahdin granite which then eroded away, exposing the more durable gray form. This explains the difference in elevation of Mount Katahdin (5267 feet) and the lesser peaks (all 4143 feet or less). Areas of sedimentary bedrock in the BSP region are low hills or valleys. The landscape became much as it is today about 2 to 5 million years ago.

GLACIAL GEOLOGY

Northern North America has been cyclically covered by glaciers over the past 1 million years. The most recent cycle, the Wisconsin glaciation, covered the Sourdnhunk Lake region with about a mile of ice and wrought major changes in

the landscape. Valley glaciers, which are confined to valleys, and continental glaciers have both played important roles in the BSP region. Probably the last glaciers to leave the area were the valley glaciers that created the three major basins on the north side of the Katahdin massif. These bowl-shaped landforms are also called cirques or ravines.

Continental glaciers, coming from the northwest, left their mark in plucking, erratics, arêtes, eskers, moraines and U-shaped valleys. The bedrock on tops of mountains was plucked on the south and east slopes by the advancing glacier, leaving exposed bedrock in the forms of cliffs and talus slopes. Most mountains in Baxter State Park, such as Strickland (just east of Sourdnehunk Lake), OJI, Coe, Doubletop and Katahdin show some evidence of **glacial plucking**. Glaciers moved rocks, even very large ones, over considerable distances and deposited them in areas of different bedrock; these are called **glacial erratics**. An **arête** is a rugged crest between two glaciated slopes. The Knife Edge on Katahdin is a classic example, formed by the valley glacier that scoured out the South Basin and a continental glacier on the other (east) side of the ridge.

When glaciers melt, the resulting melt water forms streams which run under the glacier or off the end of the glacier. These melt waters deposit sand and gravel in the form of an **esker**, if the water is sub glacial, or a **moraine**, if the water runs off the end. The South Perimeter Road of BSP follows the top of the Togue Pond esker for several miles from the South Gate toward Abol Campground. Esker sand and gravel provide high, dry ridges that may be very long. The Togue Pond esker, in fact, runs southeast of BSP, joins another esker in the town of Lincoln and continues southeasterly to near Cherryfield. The most prominent moraine in the BSP region is the Basin Pond moraine. Melt waters from the valley glaciers that made the Katahdin basins created this approximately 50 foot high transverse ridge. Water flowing off Katahdin is blocked by this ridge and forms several ponds.

Valleys formed by glaciers are typically U-shaped. Looking southeast from Sourdnehunk Lake, one can see an excellent example of such in the valley between Doubletop and Mount Coe. "Nesowadnehunk" is an Abnaki word meaning "swift stream between mountains", probably referring to Sourdnehunk Stream's rapid and sometimes chaotic passage through this glacial valley. More recently than the original Native Americans, John S. Springer in his 1851 *Forest Life and Forest Trees*, put it thus: *"Logs are now driven down streams whose navigation for such purposes was formerly regarded as impracticable—some from their diminutive size, and others from their wild, craggy channel. There is a stream of the latter description, called Nesourdnehunk, which disembogues into the Penobscot on the southwest side of Mount Ktaadn, whose foaming waters leap from crag to crag, or roll in one plunging sheet down perpendicular ledges between two mountains. On one section of this stream, said to be about half a mile in length, there is a fall of three hundred feet. In some places it falls twenty five feet perpendicularly. Down this wild pass logs are run, rolling, dashing, and plunging, end over end, making the astonished forest echo with their rebounding concussion"*.

Starting around 14,000 years ago, the ice sheet covering northern North America began to recede. First exposures of land were at higher elevations (Davis and Jacobson, 1985). As lowlands were freed from the ice, about 12,500 years ago

in the Sourdnehunk Lake region, they were rapidly colonized by plants and animals. Soil was created by plant roots and weathering, and other processes of erosion continued. One of the most spectacular forms of erosion is landslides. We can see landslides on many mountains and use them for trails, as in the cases of the Abol Slide Trail on Katahdin and the OJI South Trail. The latter mountain was named for three slides on the south slope that resembled the letters O, J and I. Subsequent erosion and growth of the forest have obscured them.

FAUNA

Over the millions of years since animals came on the land, a tremendous diversity of forms has lived in the Sourdnehunk area. While we do not have direct evidence for much of this diversity at Camp Phoenix, we can make inferences from elsewhere on the continent. For many people, the most spectacular animals of the past were dinosaurs. They went extinct very abruptly about 65 millions years ago as a result of the catastrophic collision of a large extra terrestrial object with the earth in the Yucatan Peninsula. Less known and far less understood is an extinction spasm of large mammals around 10,000 years ago (Birney, 1993). Before then, North America supported woolly mammoths, mastodons, lions, cheetahs, saber toothed tigers and giant ground sloths, to name a few. The diversity of large animals was similar to that of the Serengeti Plains of Africa today. At that time, two events threatened this fauna. First, there was considerable climatic instability. Average temperatures in Greenland, for example, increased by 7 degrees C (almost 13 degrees F) over a span of 50 years. The second threat was human immigration from Asia. As in other parts of the world where people have immigrated, such as Australia, over hunting may have led to major extinctions. Human immigration from Europe also has threatened fauna. Almost from the beginning of their arrival on this continent, Europeans bountied the large carnivores, such as mountain lion, wolf and even black bear. Massive conversion of habitat from the presettlement forest to agricultural land decimated woodland species such as deer and wild turkey. Beaver were recorded as extinct in Vermont in 1854. The woodland caribou, once common in Maine and observed swimming across Sourdnehunk Lake in the early years of Camp Phoenix, was last shot on Katahdin in 1899 and disappeared from there in about 1905 (Hakola, 1981). It went extinct in Maine in the early part of the twentieth century.

Today, animals are important at Camp Phoenix for fishing and enjoyment. Locally prominent and regionally charismatic are the brook trout, the loon and the moose—fish, fowl and plodding beast.

Brook Trout
(*Salvelinus fontinalis*)



Sourdnahunk Lake's healthy population of brook trout is one of its major natural attractions. These fish are favored for their vigorous reaction to the angler's fly, the taste of their flesh, and the beauty of their colors. The most distinctive feature for identification is the milk-white strip, set off by a black streak, on the front edge of each of the lower fins. The tail is shallowly forked to squarish, giving rise to the common name of "square tail". Brook trout are native to eastern North America and they have been introduced in many other parts of the country and the rest of the world.

Trout are members of the family Salmonidae, which also includes salmon and char. The name *Salvelinus* is an old name for char and *fontinalis* means "living in springs", in reference to brook trout's proclivity for cold water. They do not tolerate temperatures much above 68 degrees F unless there is cold water nearby, as in a lake bottom spring hole.

Brook trout normally mature in 2 years and are relatively short-lived; fish more than 3 or 4 years old are unusual and 7 year olds are rare. Size depends largely upon the quality of food supply. A 4 year old trout confined to a cold spring brook may be only 6 inches long and weigh an ounce, while a fish of the same age living in a lake rich in food may be 15 to 20 inches long and weigh 4 pounds. The largest brook trout known from Maine weighed over 11 pounds, was 30 inches long and 18 inches in girth. The world's record brook trout came from the Nipigon River, Ontario and was 14 pounds, 8 ounces in weight and 31.5 inches in length.

Brook trout spawn in the fall. In preparation for breeding, males develop a hooked lower jaw and their flanks become brightly reddish-orange. Trout from lakes usually move to colder tributaries, outlets or areas of spring seepage. Ideal spawning sites are coarse, uncompacted gravel near spring seepage. Courtship and spawning by the female involve digging an egg pit by turning on her side and rapidly beating her tail against the bottom, lifting gravel up into currents that carry it away. The egg pit is 4 to 12 inches deep. Meanwhile, males, which do not participate in nest building, vie for favor by fighting off other males. When the female is ready to spawn she settles into the egg pit and one or more males immediately come alongside her. Eggs and milt are released simultaneously. The female then digs up-current from the egg pit to cover the fertilized eggs with loosened sand and gravel. Females spread their eggs over more than one pit. The number of eggs released by a female is directly related to body size and ranges from less than 100 in a 4 inch fish to over 2,000 in a 14 or 15 inch fish.

Newly hatched brook trout eggs are called sac fry or prolarvae. They remain in the egg pit to take nourishment from the yolk sac and work their way out of the nest as the yolk sac is absorbed. The fry feed primarily on immature stages of

aquatic insects. As they grow larger, brook trout shift to mature forms, such as mayflies, worms, leeches and crustaceans. At lengths of 8 to 10 inches they acquire a taste for fish, and in Maine lakes the most important food of larger brook trout is the smelt.

Common Loon

(*Gavia immer*)



Also known as *Medawisla*, the loon may have been present in the Sourdnhunk Lake region for a long time; there are loon-like fossils elsewhere dating back 25 million years. These birds are rather large (body length is 28-36 inches), considerably larger than the ducks on Sourdnhunk Lake. Loons are remarkably adapted for life on and under the water. Sometimes they swim on the surface with only the head and neck above water, appearing like an avian submarine. Their bones are solid, not hollow like those of most birds. Loons have short wings for maneuverability in their hunt for underwater animals (especially fish), and their feet occupy an unusual position. The shortened thigh is hidden within the body putting the powerful webbed feet far back on the body for efficient water propulsion.

These adaptations make loons ill-suited for the land. Walking involves pushing themselves along on their bellies with the wings serving as crutches. The heavy bones and narrow wings compromise their ability to take off into flight; in windless conditions the take-off run can be as long as 200 yards. Nevertheless, the short wings are effective during migrations when loons travel up to 90 miles per hour.

The common loon spends the winter in the ocean and breeds in relatively large summer lakes of northern North America, Greenland and Iceland. In the winter loons are mostly grayish, with some white on the cheek and throat. The breeding plumage, as we see the loons at Sourdnhunk Lake, is glossy black on the head, neck and elsewhere except for white in a collar, in a checked pattern on the back, and on the underside. Loons tend to mate for life and return to the same lakes year after year. They prefer islands removed from predation by raccoons, skunks and mink; in their absence, they will nest near shore. During the roughly 28 day incubation period, the parents share duties for sitting on the eggs, which are usually 2. The chicks leave the nest for the water within a day of hatching and are particularly vulnerable to predation during the first two weeks of life. They are confined to their natal lake for 11 weeks, at which time they learn to fly.

Loons and their young, often times evident riding on the back of a parent, are common sights on Sourdnhunk Lake. The calls of loons are even more of a presence, and one of the most distinctive features of most large northern lakes. Loons make four kinds of calls, each with its own message. The **wail**, a mournful

and haunting cry, has long fascinated people with its near human quality. Cree Indian mythology has the wail to be the cry of a dead warrior denied entry to heaven. Thoreau (1846-1857, page 147) remarked, "*This of the loon—I do not mean its laugh, but its looning—is a long-drawn call, as it were sometimes singularly human to my ear, --hoo-hoo-ooooo, like the halooing of a man on a very high key, having thrown his voice into his head*". The wail actually signifies a loon's desire to get together with another loon, either mate or young. The urgency of this desire is registered by a higher pitch to the wail.

The loon **tremolo** or **laugh** was described by author John McPhee as the laugh of the deeply insane and may be responsible for the phrase "crazy as a loon" or the word "loony". The laugh indicates fear of another loon or people approaching too closely. This call is also part of a distraction display, in which a parent runs on the water, away from its disturbed nest. Like the wail, the pitch of the laugh increases with the level of distress. Unlike the wail, which carries a long distance and is hard to locate, the laugh does not carry far over the water but its rapid changes of pitch (about 5 per second) make it easy to pinpoint.

Male loons perform a call referred to as a **yodel**, although it may be closer to an angry scream. Yodeling is part of a territorial display carried out on boundaries or as part of challenges to territorial rights. The final loon call is the **hoot**, which resembles the yelp of a puppy and expresses a general interest. Loons in small flocks often hoot perhaps to keep track of one another. Loons may call together or chorus. On a windless night all the loons on a lake or set of nearby lakes may call in unison. Whatever the four calls mean to loons, to humans they evoke quiet nights on healthy, still-wild lakes. They are songs of place.

Moose
(*Alces alces*)



The largest member of the deer family, these familiar beasts are found across northern North America and Eurasia. Moose are common denizens of the woods and equally at home in lakes and ponds in the Sourdnahunk region.

Thoreau (1846-1857) encountered many moose in his travels in the Maine woods. On his ascent of Katahdin, he noted ("*The Maine Woods*", page 263) that "*They are described as exceedingly awkward-looking animals, with their long legs and short bodies, making a ludicrous figure when in full run, but making great headway, nevertheless*". In addition to their overall proportions, moose are distinctive for the protrusion of their snout over the mouth and the large bulge under their jaw. The protruding snout is actually quite flexible and adept at stripping leaves off branches. The function of the jaw bulge, called the "bell" or dewlap, is unknown; it may serve some role in courtship. In any event, it may be used to help identify individual animals.

"Moose" is derived from the Algonquin word for "twig eater". Throughout the year they eat twigs of hardwood species such as poplar, birch, ash, maple, cherry, shadblow and willow. Their favorite food is mountain ash. In the spring, the rise of sap makes the bark of ash and maple succulent and particularly delicious to moose. These animals use their size and strength to walk over small trees and saplings to bring the tops down to mouth level. Early successional forests created by fire, timber harvesting or spruce budworm outbreak supply more moose food than mature stands. In the winter, balsam fir is one of the most important foods of Maine moose and aquatic plants, such as pond lily, become important in the summer. The flowers and floating leaves of pond lilies grow from a horizontal stem 3 or more inches thick and relatively rich in sodium, which moose crave. Terrestrial vegetation is low in salt and like all herbivores, moose seek salt which is generally most available to them in aquatic vegetation. Moose dig up these stems and other aquatic vegetation with their feet. They also dive under water for them.

A typical day in the life of a moose involves brunch from dawn until mid-morning, a siesta of cud chewing in the middle of the day and then dinner from mid-afternoon until dark. It is pretty much a full time effort for adult moose to take in their daily ration of 40 to 50 pounds of food.

Moose are strong swimmers and enjoy lakes and ponds not only for the aquatic plants but also to escape summer heat, black flies and ticks. They may leave little more than their ears above water to listen for danger. Hearing and smell are their keenest senses. Although their vision is not particularly good, the position of their eyes allows almost 360 degree vision.

Moose are successful in northern climates because their large body size and hollow hairs help them tolerate frigid temperatures. Actually, the ideal temperature for these animals is about 10 degrees F. In fact, a moose calf does not raise its metabolic rate until the temperature falls below minus 10 degrees F. A full grown moose reaches 9 to 10 feet in length and 7 feet in height at the shoulders. Cows weigh 700 to 900 pounds and bulls 1000 to 1200. Their long legs allow them to travel through deep snow. Unless there is a crust, adult moose easily maneuver through 30 inches of snow. When the snow is very deep, they will seek the lighter snow accumulations of dense softwood stands.

Reproduction is a fall affair for moose. Bulls prepare by growing antlers in the spring and summer. They use them in the fall to establish dominance over other males. If intimidation does not suffice, they may push one another aggressively, sometimes leading to serious injury. Cows emit long drawn-out wails that bulls answer with short low grunts. Bulls may mate with several cows, spending about a week with each and losing up to 20% of their body weight during this so-called "rut". Driven by their relentless amorous pursuits, bulls tend to be cranky before and during the rut, and should be given a wide berth. Winter is spent in recovery, punctuated by the loss or shedding of antlers.

Cows generally have their first calves when 2 or 3 years old and are most productive from age 4 to 13 years. Twins are born 25-33% of the time. In most years less than half of the cows bear young. Calves are born in mid-May and remain with their mother for a full year. They gain 1 to 2 pounds daily from mother's milk. Cows vigilantly protect the young, driving off large carnivores such as wolves with

powerful kicks of the long legs. Shortly before the birth of the next young in the following spring, the mother drives the yearling off, although it may continue to follow at a distance.

Moose were important in the diets of Native Americans and early European arrivals. Thoreau noted that moose meat was "common in Bangor market". Moose hides were an item of trade. Hunting pressure, however, was intense. The first law to protect moose was passed in 1830 and allowed hunting for four months of the year only, although with no bag limit. Eventually, with the number of moose falling to about 2,000 in Maine, legal hunting was stopped in 1935. In the 1940's moose were rare in northwestern Maine. Today, the number of Maine moose has rebounded to about 20,000 and they have become common in the northwestern part of the state. This increase is attributed to tightly regulated hunting, climate, land use patterns and the density of the deer population. Maine's latitude is the southern limit of the geographic range of moose and the northern limit of white tailed deer. Shifts in climate toward milder conditions, as occurred from the late 1880's to the 1950's, favored the growth of the deer population. However, the colder temperatures and deeper snow in the 1960's and 70's were more difficult for deer than for moose.

Timber harvesting in the first half of the 20th century was characterized by small operations scattered in river valleys interspersed with mature softwood shelter. This is excellent habitat for deer. Currently, however, northern Maine timber harvesting emphasizes large areas of soft wood cutting which provides abundant browse for 5 to 15 years. Moose are able to move about in the deep snow in these cuts and take advantage of the available food resources which are not favorable to deer. The resultant reduction in the deer population further favors moose in that deer carry a parasite which is fatal to moose.

Other notable mammals in the Sourdnaunk Lake region are black bear, pine marten, fisher, ground hog, beaver and otter. The eastern coyote appeared in northern New England around 1940 and has increased in numbers dramatically since. This opportunistic species partially replaces the top predators of presettlement times, the wolf and mountain lion.

FLORA

The natural history of plants and trees in the Sourdnaunk region can be separated into pre- and post-glaciation periods. Of the former, evidence relies on the discovery of fossils and as a consequence is fairly meager. Of the latter, however, the record is rich in detail primarily through plant community reconstructive studies of pollen specimens taken from lake and pond bottom core samples. In both instances, our region has contributed greatly to the knowledge base. The Maine state fossil, a small plant called Pertica quadrifaria, was discovered in Trout Brook bedrock. A comprehensive paleoecological study of Upper South Branch Pond by Anderson, et al in 1986 documents vegetation since the retreat of the glaciers; it is an important reference for the commentary which follows. Sourdnaunk Lake lies but 9 miles away and very likely shares a similar history.

An understanding of post-glacial vegetation succession provides important context for our subsequent discussion of 3 significant plant species at Camp Phoenix: balsam fir, mountain shadbush and sweet gale. This time frame starts about 12,500 years ago and ends just 100 years ago as the land was being cleared. There are four phases:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Tundra | 12,500 to 10,500 years ago |
| 2. Woodland | 10,500 to 8,800 years ago |
| 3. Conifer-hardwood forest | 8,800 to 5,600 years ago |
| 4. Mixed hardwood-conifer forest | 5,600 to 100 years ago |

The first community to occupy the newly deglaciated area around Upper South Branch Pond was **tundra**, similar to that we see north of the tree line in the northern hemisphere. In addition to many species of sedges and grasses, the tundra supported numerous shrubs. Green alder, dwarf birch, bearberry willow, round-leaf willow and alpine bilberry were the most common shrubs of the time. The latter three are now found in Maine only in the alpine zone of Katahdin, the last remnant of this tundra plant community. Sweet gale grew along the shores of lakes or in wet depressions. Mosses were common in the tundra.

The first trees to arrive were spruces, followed soon by paper birch, balsam fir, white pine and tamarack. These trees invaded the tundra to form a more or less open **woodland**. Other trees—poplar, ash, oak, elm, hornbeam and hophornbeam—and shrubs—speckled alder, american yew, willow and shrub birch—were also present. The arrival of trees brought increases in the number of small moth larvae. Some of these larvae, such as the spruce budworm (*Choristoneura fumiferana*), feed on leaves of conifers and others attack the leaves, flowers and fruits of hardwoods. The preferred food of the spruce budworm is balsam fir, although it also feeds on spruce, hemlock, tamarack and pine. This insect is at least partly responsible for the severe reduction in the abundance of balsam fir at the end of the woodland phase. Abundant charcoal in sediments of the time indicates frequent and extensive fires, stemming from a drier climate, an increased woody fuel load from the trees of the woodland, and/or an increased woody fuel load in the form of standing trees killed by moth larval infestation. Fire would have created appropriate conditions for seedling growth of paper birch, white pine and spruce. As trees matured, moth larvae would have over-consumed and killed trees, providing yet more fuel for fires and cycles of tree population size in the woodland phase.

The first plant community of trees forming a closed canopy or **conifer-hardwood forest** developed in the Upper South Branch Pond area by about 8,800 years ago. White and red pine were particularly abundant in this forest and were joined by spruce, balsam fir and birch. Lesser amounts of tamarack, ash and oak were also present, and hemlock arrived at around 8,000 years ago. Because hemlock stands are poor feeding areas for deer and because american yew, a favorite browse of deer and moose, was apparently quite uncommon, it is thought that there were few of these animals in the area. The abundance of hemlock and yellow birch coincides with a reduction in charcoal until 7,000 years ago, a minimum that persisted until about 5,000 years ago. This was a period of warm climate and gradual changes in the vegetation.

The stability of the first forest gave way to instability in the next phase, which is referred to as a **mixed hardwood-conifer forest**. Driving this instability was the nearly complete loss of the hemlock about 4,800 years ago, presumably due to herbivory by moth larvae. Balsam fir was also set back at about the same time, perhaps by the same insect. This disturbance initiated fluctuations in species composition of the forest exacerbated by an increase in fire frequency. Hemlock's recovery was slow until the frequency of fire dropped (hemlock is highly susceptible to fire) and tamarack and arbor vitae (northern white cedar), which the moth larvae do not like to eat, became numerous. The expansion of the latter two conifers occurred from 3,300 to 1,300 years ago. Beech appeared for the first time in significant numbers during this phase. Spruce and fir occurred infrequently at 1000 years ago. By 500 years ago their numbers jumped substantially and they now make up 40% to 60 % of the forest. These increases in boreal conifer species suggest a cooler, wetter climate. They have brought the return of spruce budworm, which has caused widespread death of balsam fir during at least 5 outbreaks in the past 250 years.

Human settlement near Upper South Branch Pond is marked by an increase in sediments of pollen from grasses, both weeds and pasture species, and of ragweed, which followed people to the New World and exploded in numbers in its new environment. Lumbering began in the early 1880's around Upper South Branch Pond, first with the cutting of white pine, then hemlock, and then spruce. Fire in 1903 destroyed 92% of the Upper South Branch Pond watershed.

Today, balsam fir, spruces, northern hardwoods (yellow birch, beech and sugar maple), and hemlock are the prime trees of uplands around Sourdnaunk Lake. Ash, mountain maple, striped maple and pin cherry occur in smaller numbers. Forest composition varies with soil moisture, elevation, disturbance and the intensity of sunlight. Flat ground at lower elevations, such as the immediate vicinity of Camp Phoenix, is covered by balsam fir, black spruce, red maple, elm, arbor vitae, sweet gale, dogwood and speckled alder. Slopes bearing good soils support northern hardwoods along with eastern hemlock and red spruce. White spruce appears in well drained, deep soils. At higher elevations balsam fir and black spruce dominate, forming dense, low forests at the highest elevations of Katahdin called "Krummholz" (meaning "crooked wood"; Marchand, 1987).

Three plants characteristic of the Sourdnaunk Lake region are balsam fir, mountain shadbush, and sweet gale—forest tree, upland shrub and wetland shrub. Balsam fir is locally common and grows particularly well on the wet soils bordering Sourdnaunk Lake and at higher elevations of the mountains we view and climb. It is significant to wildlife and as a timber species. Mountain shadbush is a common shrub of uplands and lowlands in the region and graces the land with its attractive flowers and edible fruits. Sweet gale is a wetlands shrub that is frequent along Sourdnaunk Lake's shores. Each of these species is important to other organisms in the ecosystem, has been used by people in various ways and is inherently interesting in its natural history.

Balsam Fir
(*Abies balsamea*)



This important forest tree ranges from Alberta to Newfoundland, south to northern New England, west to Minnesota, with an isolated distribution in the mountains of West Virginia and Virginia (Farrar, 1995). The tree is easy to recognize. It is small to medium-sized, 40 to 60 feet tall and 12 to 18 inches in diameter. It tapers to a spire-like top, a good architecture for shedding snow. Bark of young fir trees is smooth, gray and marked by bumps filled with a clear, sticky resin. The bark of older trees has reddish-brown scaly plates. Its needles are flat, dark green and bear two white stripes on the lower surface. Hemlock needles have the same two bands, but differ in their attachment. Balsam fir needles have a suction cup-like attachment and when the needles fall they leave a circular scar and a smooth branch. In contrast, hemlock needles attach to a peg-like projection that persists on the branch after the needle falls, making the branch rough to touch. Balsam fir cones are unusual in that they stand upright, rather than hanging down like most conifers. They disintegrate at maturity, leaving a naked axis. Lastly, balsam fir buds exude a resin whereas hemlock buds do not.

Balsam fir is short-lived compared to many other conifers. While it may live to 200 years, trees over 90 years old show a lot of butt rot from fungal infection. The major natural threat to balsam fir is spruce budworm. The species is also susceptible to other insects—balsam woolly adelgid and hemlock looper—and to fire. Forest fires prevent regeneration of balsam fir.

There are several reasons for the success of this species. It is adaptable to a variety of soils and climates. In BSP, it ranges from the lowest to the highest elevations, from soils saturated with water to well-drained rocky soils, and from full sun to shaded forest floor. Balsam fir seedlings often predominate in mixed stands; the seeds, which are abundant, germinate and survive in humus layers, and are very shade tolerant. Young stands are often so dense that walking through them is difficult. Early colonialists described spruce-fir forests as “a wrath of savage vegetation” (Marchand 1987, page 14). Like other conifers, fir has an advantage over hardwoods, which lose their leaves every year; the resources required to produce leaves bring a greater return if the leaves/needles are held for two or more years.

This species shows a distinctive feature known only from higher elevations of the northern Appalachian Mountains and, in another conifer, in Japan. On slopes of the so-called Klondike portion of BSP, where the forest is almost exclusively balsam fir, there appear bands with alternating strips of living and dead fir. These **fir waves**, as the bands are called, were once thought to be the result of heavy winds, as in the 1938 hurricane. But study of the phenomenon shows that it is

based on waves of disturbance and regeneration moving at a rate of 3 to 5 feet a year (Marchand 1987).

Balsam fir is important commercially as a source of pulp for paper making and other purposes. It is favored for Christmas trees and wreaths because the needles stay for a long time after the tree is cut. Its boughs were the mattress of choice for Thoreau on his climb of Katahdin. Its needles, as the name indicates, are fragrant and are used to stuff pillows. This species imparts a wonderful fragrance to the air of the north woods.

Mountain Shadbush

(*Amelanchier bartarmiana*)



This is a common shrub of uplands where recent disturbance has opened the canopy. It grows beside the BSP perimeter road, along trails and along the edges of clearings. There is a large example of shadbush at the beginning of the path to the Camp Phoenix water tower. It takes to the mountains well, extending nearly to the top of the headwall of Katahdin's North Basin.

Mountain shadbush is most evident in the spring because its showy white flowers stand out against the green of the forest. The leaves are borne singly, taper toward both ends and bear very fine teeth on the margins. The fruit resembles a small pear although it is dark purple and only pea-sized. Shadbushes are closely related to pears and apples, and their fruits are therefore pomes, not berries. Other species of shadbush are commonly grown as ornamentals for the attractive flowers, smooth gray bark, leaves and fruits.

This species nourishes many creatures, large and small. The flowers attract insects which consume nectar and/or pollen. In return for these food rewards, the insects pollinate the flowers. Without this pollen transfer among individuals, fruit would not be produced. Herbivores, such as moose, deer and caribou, consume shadbush leaves and buds. Many birds, rodents and larger mammals relish shadbush fruit. Native Americans used these fruits in pemmican, an amalgam of dried fruits and meats that stores well and is highly nutritious. Another common name, sugarplum, describes the sweetness of the fruit. Sugarplum pie is a special culinary treat. A western North American species of shadbush is grown commercially for the fruits.

Shadbushes thrive where humans disrupt natural landscapes. Prior to the arrival of people in the New World (probably shortly after the end of the last glaciation), there were not as many habitats available as there are now. Species of shadbush that lived separately were brought together by human disturbance and then hybridized. Unlike many hybrids, which are sterile, shadbush hybrids reproduce well. You can observe an example of shadbush hybridization beside the

perimeter road at Ledge Falls. Both mountain and smooth shadbush, another species, grow there along with their hybrid. The smooth variant is a tree with much larger flowers. The hybrid is intermediate between its parents in overall size, flower size and other features distinguishing the parents. Hybridization has been a creative force in shadbush evolution.

Sweet Gale

(*Myrica gale*)



Unlike the previous two plants, which are conspicuous because of size or flowers, sweet gale is just a little shrub. Despite its lack of size and striking features, this species is highly successful ecologically, is long known and is used by people for its aromatic oils.

Sweet gale usually grows no more than 3 or 4 feet high. Its leaves are borne singly (1 or 2 inches long), strongly ascending, narrowly wedge-shaped and slightly toothed above the middle. Pollen and fruits are produced on separate individuals. The fruits, which are small nutlets, appear in cone-like clusters about one-half inch long. The most distinctive feature of the plant is the presence of tiny yellow dots, barely visible to the unaided eye, that glisten in the sunlight. These dots are present on stems, leaves (especially the lower surface), and most abundantly on the fruits. The dots contain an essential oil, the composition of which is unknown as far as I know. It is volatile and responsible for the sweet fragrance indicated by the name. Just crush some leaves in your hand to smell the oil. Most of us are familiar with the fragrance of candles scented with oils of bayberry, another species of the genus *Myrica*. The oil of sweet gale is the reason for people's interest in the plant and possibly for herbivores' apparent disinterest in it.

Sweet gale nutlets have been used in France as a spice, having "a delicious fragrance suggestive of sage" (Fernald et al 1958, page 146). The leaves were at one time, and perhaps still are, relied upon in Maine as a cure for colds and catarrh, "popular with the children if not always efficacious" (ibid). In England, the leaves have sometimes been used as an agreeable for hops substitute in making gale beer. This beverage is more alcoholic than hopped beer and has therefore been banned in some European countries. In Scotland, sweet gale oil is being used as a bug repellent.

The geographic distribution of this species is circumboreal; it grows in northern latitudes around the world. In Maine, its habitat is "wet shores, bogs, borders of swamps, and wet depressions in the mountains" (Hyland and Steinmetz 1944, page 11). It is thus an obligate wetlands plant, which means that it is not known to grow well or at all outside of wetlands. Wetlands are important habitat

for biodiversity and water quality, and are under threat from human activities in much of the world.

Sweet gale shows interesting adaptations for life in wetlands. First, it one of the few plants that is able to use atmospheric nitrogen. Gaseous nitrogen is inert and inaccessible to all organisms except a few bacteria with enzymes that fix or convert it to ammonia, from which nitrogen is readily accessible. Legumes (peas, beans, clover and many other species) and a few other plants have evolved a symbiosis with nitrogen-fixing bacteria. The bacteria are sheltered within the roots of the plant and the plant benefits from nitrogen made available by the bacteria. Sweet gale's symbiosis with these bacteria gives it a great advantage in the nitrogen-poor soil along lake shores and in other wetlands. The nitrogen converted by the bacteria is cycled into wetlands when the leaves and other parts of sweet gale are shed, thereby increasing productivity.

A second adaptation for wetlands that we can see is in the fruit of sweet gale. The nutlets have two swim bladders which facilitate water dispersal. Lastly, the nitrogen-rich tissues of sweet gale should make it desirable to wetland herbivores. However, and as we have seen, the sweet gale oil makes the plant unpalatable, affording it some measure of protection.

NATURAL HISTORY IN THE FUTURE OF SOURDNAHUNK LAKE

Natural history of the region teaches us that the natural world is in constant flux over intervals of hundreds of years. In the short term, measured in human generations, we should protect Sourdnehunk Lake in a spirit similar to Percival Baxter's "forever wild" legacy in Baxter State Park. This effort must extend far beyond the pristine depression of Sourdnehunk Lake because many threats to the flora and fauna of the region come from afar. Air pollution generated by industry and power generation hundreds of miles to the west imperils lake fauna and flora with acidification and mercury contamination. Acidified lakes support far fewer fish, and therefore loons, than pristine lakes. Global climate change from accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere could be so severe that organisms, especially plants, will not be able to disperse rapidly enough to migrate to appropriate new habitat.

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OUR terms to guests at Camp Phoenix are \$5.00 per day; \$28.00 per week. Guides' wages, \$5.00 per day; guides' board, \$2.50 per day. Parties coming by train will be met at Millinocket. Train leaving Boston in the evening arrives at Millinocket at 5.55 the next morning; cost of transportation from Millinocket to Camp \$7.50 each person.

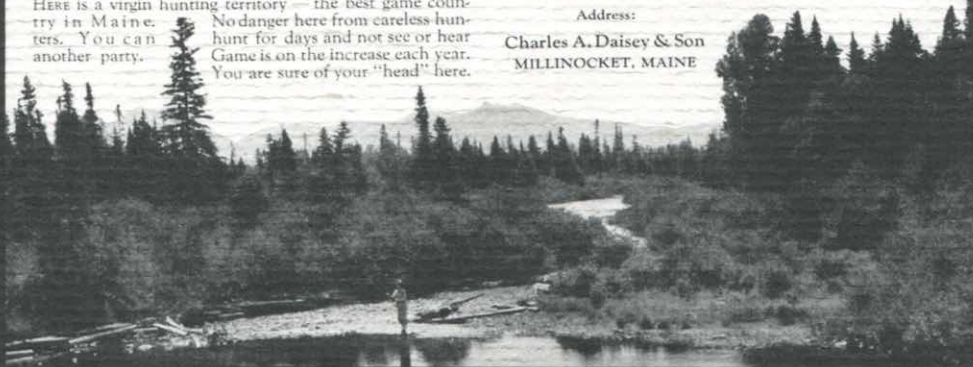
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bill Horner and his wife, Cookie, live in Bar Harbor, Maine. In 1992 they had the good fortune to buy one of the Camp Phoenix cabins with another couple, friends of long standing. A Maine coastal native and only occasional visitor to Baxter State Park, Bill was immediately drawn to the stunning beauty and isolated timelessness of Camp Phoenix and Soudnahunk Lake. An amateur historian, he began a long and fascinating search for literature references, photographs and people which fixed the origin of Camp Phoenix to 1896.

He helped to organize the Camp Phoenix Centennial celebration in 1996 which was attended by all current and several previous owners. At this time, Bill serves as president of the Camp Phoenix Owners Association and in his present semi-retirement, promises to finally get the official history into print in this year of 2007.